



Attendance Policy

This policy is prescribed by The Good Shepherd Trust and is statutory. All references to 'the trust', includes all trust schools and subsidiary organisations.

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Local noting:	Local Committee	Local author:	Headteacher/Principal
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Revision record

Minor revisions should be recorded here when the policy is amended in light of changes to legislation or to correct errors. Significant changes or at the point of review should be recorded below and approved at the level indicated above.

Revision No.	Date	Revised by	Approved date	Comments
1	06/09/2026	L Tedbury	09/09/2026	Updates throughout to reflect latest guidance and with a stronger emphasis on safeguarding protocols and the consideration of vulnerable pupils

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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 School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents> [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- The [Equality Act 2010](#)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made> It also refers to:

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Headteacher/Principal

The Headteacher/Principal is responsible for:

- The local adaption and implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the local committee
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- 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 all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Applying to the local authority for the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising administrator to be able to do so
- Reporting pupils added or removed from roll outside usual transition points, pupils with 10 days unauthorised absence, pupils at risk of missing 15 days due to sickness
- 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
- Ensuring that attendance concerns are considered alongside safeguarding information and that appropriate referrals are made where attendance concerns indicate a child may be at risk of harm, child exploitation, neglect, children missing education or other safeguarding concerns.
- Having in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (please refer to our child protection policy), including referral and information-sharing with the local authority.

3.2 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also referred to as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis (see section 7)
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Working to tackle persistent absence, with the attendance officer

- 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
- Advising the administrator (authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at Walsh C of E Junior School is Sophie Huntbach and can be contacted via the school office on 01252 329525. An attendance officer supports them in their role.
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at Walsh C of E Infant School is Helen Wall and can be contacted via the school office on 01252 321426. An attendance officer supports them in their role
- The attendance officer is Claire Sharp at Walsh C of E Junior School and can be contacted via the school office on 01252 329525. The attendance officer at Walsh C of E Infant School is Anna Sanders and can be contacted via the school office on 01252 321426. The attendance officer share responsibility for attendance with the designated senior leader.

3.3 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), via the electronic system (Arbor).

3.4 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day to day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the designated attendance officer or senior leader responsible for attendance where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

3.5 The local committee

The local committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring that school leaders have adapted the trust template policy and that it is published on the website.
- Monitoring and interrogating attendance data.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and to ensure school leaders focus improvement efforts on cohorts and pupil groups who need it most
- Holding the Headteacher/Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

3.6 Central Education Team

The central education team and trust Head of Inclusion are responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with other trust schools and 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 trust

- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

3.7 The Trust Board

The trust board is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole trust and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the trust's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs within the schools
- Holding the central team to account for the implementation of this policy

3.8 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)
- Parents are expected to:
 - Make sure their child attends school every day on time
 - Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30 a.m. on the day of the absence in person or by telephone (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
 - Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
 - Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
 - Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
 - Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Helen Wall (Deputy Headteacher) or Sophie Huntbach (Assistant Headteacher) who can be contacted via the school offices.

3.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

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

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
 - The original entry
 - The amended entry
 - The reason for the amendment
 - The date on which the amendment was made
 - The name and position of the person who made the amendment
- See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.
- We will also record:
 - Whether the absence is authorised or not
 - The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
 - The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Infants

The school day starts at 8.45 and ends at 15.15.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 and will be kept open until 9.05. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.00 and will be kept open until 13.20.

Juniors

The school day starts at 8.50 and ends at 15.20.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50 and will be kept open until 9.10. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.10 and will be kept open until 13.30

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30 a.m. or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via the junior main school office on 01252 329525 or the infant main school office on 01252 321426.

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

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

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

4.3 Planned absence

Parents are requested to complete the **Absence Request Form** (available from the school offices), stating the reason for absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.

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

However, we encourage parents 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 must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

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

Persistent lateness by a pupil will be referred to the Inclusion Officer and can be subject to penalty notices.

Late arrival after the close of registration on 10 occasions during a half-term where the pupil's attendance falls below 90% will be referred to the Inclusion Officer and may be subject to penalty notices.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the local authority or other partner agencies
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate
- Where a pupil is absent without explanation, the school will undertake appropriate first-day response procedures. Where concerns remain, the school will consider safeguarding action, including consultation with the DSL, home visits, contact with social workers, police welfare checks and referral to children's social care where appropriate.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly attendance notices (RAG letters) and where attendance is a concern, 3-6 weekly communications which can include phone calls, emails and letters.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

The Headteacher/Principal will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

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

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events which are unavoidable or where external circumstances make the date unchangeable for the pupil.

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

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school offices. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- 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
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school is committed to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to attend regularly and achieve success. Guided by our Christian ethos, we believe that all children are valued, known and belong within our school community. We recognise that positive attendance is secured through strong relationships with families, early support and creating an environment where children feel safe, respected and eager to learn. To support this, we:

- Ensure that school is a welcoming, inclusive and nurturing environment where every child feels valued and has a strong sense of belonging. Through a broad, ambitious and enriching curriculum, children experience success, develop confidence and develop positive attitudes towards attending school.
- Work strategically in partnership with parents and carers to promote the importance of regular attendance. Through positive relationships, regular communication, early identification of concerns and tailored support plans, we work proactively with families to overcome barriers and secure improvements in attendance.
- Celebrate and reward positive attendance through whole-school assemblies, certificates, newsletters, displays and communication with families. Individual pupils are recognised for excellent or improved attendance, while classes are celebrated through attendance awards, competitions and weekly recognition that promote collective responsibility and pride.
- Raise awareness of the importance of good attendance throughout our whole-school ethos and curriculum and ensure that children are recognised and praised for good attendance.

Where appropriate, we might consider the use of an attendance contract which is a formal written agreement between a parent(s) and school to address irregular attendance at school. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution.

7. Supporting pupils with poor attendance

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

7.1 Attendance contract

We use attendance contracts as a form of attendance support.

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

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

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

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

7.2 Education supervision order

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

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

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

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

7.3 Notice to improve

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

A notice 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.

It 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, or prosecution considered, 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

7.4 Penalty notices

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

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

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

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

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

Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution

Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Poor attendance may be an indicator of wider safeguarding concerns, including neglect, mental health difficulties, domestic abuse, child exploitation, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation or unmet needs. Where attendance concerns arise, schools will consider whether safeguarding assessment, Early Help intervention or referral to children's social care is required.

8.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the pupil's needs, we will inform the local authority. The Trust recognises emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) as a potential barrier to attendance. Schools should work collaboratively with pupils, families and partner agencies to identify underlying causes and develop appropriate support plans.

We recognise that some pupils face complex barriers to attendance and may require additional support to access education successfully. Guided by our Christian ethos, we are committed to ensuring that every child is valued, included and supported to attend school. We work closely with pupils, parents and carers to build a shared understanding of the barriers affecting attendance and to identify effective solutions.

Where attendance concerns arise, we adopt a graduated approach to support, using assess, plan, do, review principles to identify needs, implement appropriate strategies and regularly evaluate their impact. Reasonable adjustments may be made to remove barriers to attendance and participation, taking account of a pupil's individual needs, vulnerabilities and circumstances. These adjustments may include adapted routines, personalised support, transition arrangements, safe spaces, sensory or emotional regulation strategies, or temporary timetable adaptations where appropriate.

We work collaboratively with families to develop tailored attendance support plans that focus on achievable next steps and sustained improvement. Where additional expertise is required, we seek support from external agencies, including health professionals, SEND services, mental health and emotional wellbeing teams, family support services and the Local Authority. Multi-agency meetings may be held to ensure support is coordinated and effective.

Through strong relationships, early intervention and the removal of in-school barriers, we aim to ensure that every pupil feels safe, understood and able to attend school regularly, enabling them to thrive both academically and personally.

8.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils, however we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate. Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

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

8.3 Pupils absent due to other barriers to attendance

We recognise that some pupils face additional challenges which can impact their ability to attend school regularly. This may include pupils who are disadvantaged, known or previously known to Children's Social Care, young carers, pupils with SEND, or those experiencing social, emotional or mental health difficulties. Through our Christian ethos, we ensure that every child is valued, supported and given the opportunity to succeed. Attendance is monitored strategically and interventions are timely, appropriate, well-chosen and targeted to individual needs. We work closely with pupils, families and external agencies to identify barriers early and implement a graduated approach to support, making reasonable adjustments where required to remove barriers and improve attendance.

To support pupils with complex barriers to attendance, we:

- Monitor attendance regularly through fortnightly attendance reviews and analysis of attendance data to identify emerging concerns and trends at the earliest opportunity.
- Maintain consistent communication with families through meetings, phone calls, attendance letters and personalised support plans to build positive relationships and secure improvements in attendance.
- Provide pastoral support within school through trusted adults, nurture provision, emotional check-ins and tailored transition arrangements to help pupils feel safe, settled and ready to learn.
- Utilise our ELSA provision to support pupils whose attendance is impacted by emotional wellbeing needs, anxiety, friendship difficulties or low self-esteem.
- Use attendance reports and pupil-level analysis to evaluate the impact of interventions and ensure support remains targeted and effective.
- Adopt a graduated approach of assess, plan, do, review, working collaboratively with families and external professionals to implement and evaluate support strategies.
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate, including adapted start-of-day routines, phased transitions, safe spaces, sensory regulation strategies, additional adult support or temporary timetable adaptations.
- Work in partnership with external agencies, including Children's Social Care, Family Support Services, Early Help, health professionals and the Local Authority, to coordinate support for pupils and families with the most complex needs.
- Provide additional support and consideration for vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils known to Children's Social Care and young carers, ensuring barriers are identified and addressed as quickly as possible.

Through these approaches, we strive to remove in-school barriers, strengthen family engagement and ensure all pupils can attend school regularly, feel a strong sense of belonging and achieve their full potential.

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

Where a pupil has experienced a prolonged absence, the school will consider whether a reintegration plan is required and whether there have been any changes to the pupil's safeguarding, welfare, SEND or mental health needs during the period of absence.

To support successful reintegration, we may:

- Develop a personalised reintegration timetable, including a phased return where appropriate, to help pupils gradually rebuild confidence and attendance.

- Identify and implement reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to attendance and participation in school life.
- Provide additional pastoral support through trusted adults, regular check-ins and emotional wellbeing support to help pupils feel safe, valued and connected to school.
- Ensure pupils receive appropriate academic support, including catch-up interventions, adapted learning and targeted teaching to address gaps in learning resulting from their absence.
- Work closely with class teachers to build confidence and success in the classroom through carefully planned support and achievable next steps.
- Maintain regular communication with parents and carers to discuss progress, celebrate successes and address any emerging concerns.
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8.5 Prolonged absence for children in the EYFS

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

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

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

We will also implement our safeguarding procedures (see our child protection/safeguarding policy [\[insert link\]](#)) and refer any concerns to local children's social care and/or request a police welfare check.

9. Attendance monitoring

The Trust recognises that poor attendance may be an indicator of wider safeguarding concerns. Where attendance concerns arise, schools will consider whether there are underlying safeguarding, welfare, mental health, SEND or family support needs. Attendance concerns should be discussed with the DSL where appropriate and recorded in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures. Particular attention will be given to pupils who are persistently absent, severely absent, have a social worker, are looked after or previously looked after, are young carers, or are otherwise identified as vulnerable.

To support strong attendance, we:

- Carry out regular attendance monitoring and analysis, including attendance, absence and punctuality data for individual pupils, vulnerable groups and whole-school cohorts.
- Produce and review attendance reports every three weeks to identify trends, emerging concerns and areas requiring additional support or intervention.
- Communicate attendance information with parents and carers regularly, celebrating success while discussing concerns and agreed actions where attendance falls below expected levels.
- Monitor punctuality closely and work with families where lateness becomes a pattern, recognising the impact that missed learning time can have on progress and wellbeing.
- Track attendance trends over time to identify recurring barriers and evaluate the effectiveness of support strategies and interventions.
- Take swift action when concerns arise, implementing a graduated response that may include meetings with families, attendance support plans, reasonable adjustments, targeted pastoral support and referrals to external agencies where appropriate.

9.1 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.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely. Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the local committee.

9.2 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

9.3 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 severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to classteachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the local committee and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the Good Shepherd Trust, the local 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

9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the 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:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance

- Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
 - Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
 - Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
 - Consider whether persistent or severe absence may indicate safeguarding concerns and will address these in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated and, as a minimum, bi-annually by the GST Head of Safeguarding. At every review, the policy will be approved by the chief education officer and presented for noting to the full trust board and local committee

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy (and exclusions)
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- SEND policy
- Privacy statement

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

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

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are:

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