Maidstone & Malling Alternative Provision

INSPIRING ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH INCLUSION AND SUPPORT

ATTENDANCE POLICY



REVIEWING AND UPDATING THE POLICY

Date	Reviewed By	Approved by MC
October 2024	L Aitken-Cooper	
October 2025	L Aitken-Cooper	
October 2026	L Aitken-Cooper	

This policy will be reviewed annually or before if significant changes take place and amended as necessary

ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Maidstone and Malling Alternative Provision is committed to providing an excellent education for pupils of all abilities. High attendance is essential for children to work to their full potential, be successful and benefit from the opportunities available to them at their school. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly, since high attendance is also a necessity in preparing them for their future life as a working adult.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance. Through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, we intend to

- Promote good attendance
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Promote and support punctuality to lessons
- Build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

AIMS

- To raise attendance for all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, vulnerable or have attended less well in the past
- To promote the importance of attendance in improving the wellbeing, safeguarding and outcomes of all pupils
- To work collaboratively with families and local partners in the following way:

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A STUDENTS IS REFERRED/COMMISSIONED INTO AP?

- The home school will send in all appropriate paperwork to dual register a pupil (this may be for a 12-week program or full time)
- A home visit by our Pastoral Team and a school visit will be arranged
- An induction day/half day for testing will be completed
- Then a start date will be given
- There will be reviews throughout the 12-week program and throughout the year by the home school, local authority and a MMAP representative. 10 week reviews main focus is to devise a plan for the reintegration back to the home school.
- It is both MMAP and the home school's responsibility to support the attendance of the young person
- Home schools receive bi-weekly reports on attendance and engagement.

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Poor attendance not only undermines a child's education and future life chances, but it can also put children at risk, encouraging anti-social behavior or activity that makes a child vulnerable. For our most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and supported.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling. Regular absence will seriously affect their learning and has a negative impact on academic achievement. Any pupil's absence also disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning and progress of other pupils. **"We want your child in education; let's understand what is preventing this and work together to remove the barriers."**

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY EXPECTATIONS

It is our expectation that all pupils will achieve at least 97% attendance. To achieve this, a pupil should have no more than 6 days off school in any academic year. Pupils are also expected to arrive on time and be in full school uniform ready for school every day and be on time for all of their lessons. This means that all pupils should be in school before their first lesson starts at 8.45 a.m. and remain in school until the school day ends at 2.15 pm, having attended all of their lessons. To support pupils' punctuality each morning, there are staff in school to open the main school gates from 8.15 a.m. and we run a breakfast club in the mornings from 8.30 a.m. until 8.45 a.m.

LEGAL PARENTAL DUTY

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives an efficient, full time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. Parents have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend, or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Any parent who allows their child to be absent from school, without an authorised reason, creates an offence in law which may result in prosecution. We may request appropriate evidence where there are genuine and reasonable grounds to do so. Medical evidence will not be requested routinely or unnecessarily.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/carers are expected to

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time
- Contact the school by 9.00 a.m. on the first day of absence and on subsequent days on the dedicated attendance telephone number 01622 753772 ext. 301, or by emailing the Attendance Officer, Angela Kent at akent@mmap.kent.sch.uk
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Communicate, as early as possible, circumstances which may affect absence or require support
- Be aware of their legal responsibilities for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance
- Provide a reason immediately each time their child does not attend school and advise the school in advance of medical or other urgent appointments, which should not normally result in a full-days absence
- Take an active interest in their child's education and promote the benefits of regular attendance
- Attend all attendance improvement meetings and be willing to discuss poor attendance

patterns and possible solutions.

Parents should do everything possible to encourage their child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity. Allowing your child to be absent, without taking any action, is likely to make the situation worse and gives your child the impression that attendance does not matter.

We are here to support you and your child through any barriers for non-attendance and to support you further, we offer a strictly confidential in-house counselling support program for both children and parents/carers which is free.

If you find it difficult to talk in a group, or if you have things going on that you would prefer to talk about, we offer 1-1 counselling. This can be about anything that is affecting your life, as anything that may be troubling you will be having an impact on your children as well and we want to support and help you all. This could include mental health issues, anxiety, depression, bereavement, drug or alcohol issues, domestic or sexual abuse, or anything that you are finding difficult. Counselling sessions can be face to face in school, online or by phone depending what works best for you. Please contact Jenny Maydon, our School Counsellor to make an appointment via jmaydon@mmap.kent.sch.uk or call Angela Kent on 01622 753772 ext. 301.

If you would like to discuss your child's attendance, contact should be made with the Attendance Officer - Angela Kent, Pastoral Team - Michele Jackson/Rebecca Shepherd, Designated Senior Attendance Champion – Lee Aitken-Cooper or the Headteacher – Stacie Smith using the relevant email address below:

Attendance Officer:	akent@mmap.kent.sch.uk
Pastoral Team:	mjackson@mmap.kent.sch.uk
	rshepherd@mmap.kent.sch.uk
Designated Senior Attendance Champion:	laitken-cooper@mmap.kent.sch.uk
Headteacher:	ssmith@mmap.kent.sch.uk

Pupils are expected to

- Attend school every day on time
- Be prepared for the day in full school uniform
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- Attend any meetings and engage in strategies around improving their attendance
- Tell their parents and staff at the school about anything that is affecting their attendance at school, including reporting bullying.

The Management Committee are responsible for

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Holding school leaders to account for the implementation of this policy
- Making sure school leaders fulfill expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The Headteacher is responsible for

- The implementation of this policy in their school
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices (or delegating this duty), where necessary
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Management Committee.

The Designated Senior Attendance Champion will

- Lead attendance across the school
- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes
- Have an oversight of data analysis
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Working closely with Key Stakeholders
- Updating school records, analysing attendance data and providing reports to senior managers and other professionals
- Meeting with school staff, pupils and parents to establish the reasons for poor attendance and agreeing strategies and timescales to tackle any issues
- Working with local partners as required
- Keeping records of all interventions and updating information on the schools Management Information System
- Contributing to initiatives that promote the importance of good attendance.

Form Tutors are responsible for

- Reinforcing attendance and punctuality expectations in tutor time
- Promoting rewards and celebrating progress with their tutees
- Reviewing tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues and help set targets with pupils
- Engage with parents/carers and pupils to discuss any attendance concerns at the earliest opportunity.

The Attendance Officer is responsible for

- First day calling procedures
- Collating and entering registration information as required
- Monitoring and recording holiday requests and other leaves of absence
- Contacting parents regarding unexplained absences
- Preparing paperwork for referrals to the local authority
- Following up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence
- Contacting parents and carers regarding absence and poor punctuality
- Reinforcing attendance and punctuality expectations in weekly Student Voice
- Promoting rewards and celebrating progress
- Applying rewards and sanctions consistently
- Identifying and mitigating potential barriers to good attendance in liaison with families and local partners
- Monitoring the attendance email account and telephone line.

The Attendance Improvement Programme Officer (AIP) is responsible for

- Working closely with the Attendance Officer, Designated Senior Attendance Champion and local partners over pupils at risk of Persistent or Severe absence
- Overseeing referrals to the local authority
- Working closely with families when carrying out case work for pupils in the persistent and severe absence categories and any pupils who are not succeeding because of their attendance.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a habit of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of Maidstone and Malling Alternative Provision staff. To maintain a focus on this, we will maintain regular contact with parents and carers regarding their child's attendance and report regularly on how their child is attending.

At Maidstone and Malling Alternative Provision, we have extensive rewards and incentives to celebrate and promote children's attendance with individual, class and whole school rewards based on 100% attendance and punctuality. We know that every day matters and want to ensure that pupils are making the most of all the opportunities we provide them on a daily basis.

We do consider the circumstances of individuals and take them into account when rewarding children's attendance (for example, absences that are as a result of medical issues) to ensure that all children are rewarded fairly. However, we like to remind parents that the true reward of attendance will be seen in your child's progress, not only academically, but also socially, emotionally and through their personal growth.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING

We will monitor attendance and absence data weekly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level. We will also identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. We understanding children missing education can be a warning sign for safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child criminal/sexual exploitation. persistent, unexplained or sudden changes in attendance, particularly where accompanied by changes in presentation, behaviour, peer relationships or family circumstances, will be considered as potential safeguarding indicators.

As part of the new statutory requirements, whole school attendance data is automatically shared daily with the Department for Education and the Local Authority.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE DATA

Since poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early intervention is crucial. School staff will analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support. They will then use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families. In developing support strategies, they will also look into historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence.

The Senior Leadership Team, pastoral leads, Headteacher and form tutors will receive regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families. They will use the data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future

strategies.

TIERED APPROACH TO SUPPORTING ATTENDANCE

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and, at all stages of improving attendance, staff will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance. To maximise support and ensure early intervention, pupils are placed in an attendance tier related to the number of days they have been absent from school and their risk of underachieving due to absence:

TIER	RISK OF UNDERACHIEVING	PERCENTAGE	DAYS ABSENT	ACTION	LEAD
1	NONE	96% - 100%	0 - 7	Promoting and rewarding good attendance	
2	LOW	93% - 95.99%	8 - 13	Initial School Support	
3	SERIOUS	85% - 92.99%	14 - 28	Escalated School Support & referral to External Agencies	
4	CRITICAL	<85%	28+	Referral External Agencies & the Local Authority for statutory intervention	External Agencies & Local Authority
5	EXTREME	<50%	95+	Referral to the Local Authority for statutory intervention	Local Authority

As part of our work to improve pupils' attendance and reduce absence, school staff will phone and write to parents, hold attendance improvement meetings, conduct home visits and liaise with Early Help and Children's Social Services. For any pupils with attendance below 96%, the attendance team may invite parents/carers for a meeting to discuss the situation. If absences persist, they will refer the matter to the Attendance Improvement Programme (AIP).

On a case by case basis, the school will request medical evidence to verify a reason for absence. We encourage parents/carers to provide this evidence, even if it has not been requested.

REDUCING PERSISTENT AND SEVERE ABSENCE

- **Persistent Absence** is where a pupil misses 10% or more possible sessions
- **Severe absence** refers to pupils who are absent from school for 50% or more of their possible sessions, resulting in attendance below 50%.

In the above cases, we will use attendance data to find patterns and trends of absence and carry out an audit to identify family, socio-economic or pupil-related barriers to good attendance.

Once identified, we will provide access to wider support services to help remove these barriers. We will hold regular meetings with parents and liaise and work with our attendance service and the local authority for additional support. We will also request penalty notices and other sanctions if support is not appropriate (e.g. for an unauthorised leave in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

Category	Support from School
AT RISK OF BECOMING PERSISTENTLY ABSENT	• Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance • 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 • If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act 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.
PERSISTENTLY ABSENT	• Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent • Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary, this includes working with partners • 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 statutory children's social care • Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings
SEVERELY ABSENT	• Continue support as for persistently absent pupils • Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority, AIP and home school

PUPILS WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS, YOUNG CARERS OR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions, young carers, or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and, therefore, the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as they are for any other pupil. However, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as an alternative provision provided by the local authority.

For all pupils with SEND or young carers we will:

- Maintain a high ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance
- Ensure a joined- up approach with the Pastoral Team and, where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan
- If applicable, we will ensure the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.

PART-TIME TIMETABLES

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A part-time timetable will only be in place for the shortest time necessary and will not be treated as a long-term solution. Any attendance support programme, or other agreement, will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or in an alternative provision. There will be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing the part time provision with the pupil and their parents. A pastoral support program will be signed by parents and review weekly by the AIP/SLT. Additional work to support the education will also be sent home.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

We will keep an **attendance register**, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take this register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. The attendance register will record every pupil in one of the following categories:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent

We will also record:

- Whether an 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.

[See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes]

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school is classified as either **authorised** or **unauthorised.** Registers are taken twice a day by staff to record attendance marks for each session. Registers are legal documents so school staff are obliged to complete them accurately. Information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers. School staff can change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence, and vice versa, if new information is presented. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school, there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school that have an acceptable reason, agreed by the school. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent due to:

- Leave already granted by the school
- Sickness or any unavoidable cause - this must only relate to the child, not their parent or other family member
- Medical/dental appointments that could not be arranged outside of school hours
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong
- Failure by the local authority to provide transport
- Traveler pupils travelling for occupational purposes. Absence may be authorised only when a traveler 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.

Absence will be authorised only where the reason falls within the circumstances permitted by the attendance regulations and statutory guidance, or where the school has granted leave of absence in accordance with those requirements.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. With unauthorised absence, the school does not agree that the reason given by a parent is acceptable. This type of absence can lead to the local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised reasons include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time, unless an authorised school trip
- Oversleeping
- Absence to look after an unwell sibling/family member
- Confusion over term dates.

School refusal

We are aware that some students may refuse to come to school, we understand a pupil may be experiencing anxiety, SEND-related barriers, trauma, bullying, mental health difficulties, unmet additional needs, safeguarding concerns, difficulties associated with transition into AP.

The **reason for the absence** should will established and coded appropriately. We will then address the underlying barrier.

UNPLANNED ABSENCE

Parents/carers must provide the school with a detailed reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by contacting school by 9.00a.m. on the first day of absence and on subsequent days on the dedicated attendance telephone number or email:

01622 753772 ext. 301
akent@mmap.kent.sch.uk

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised, unless the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, we 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 we are not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

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 and provides evidence of the appointment.

However, 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. We would expect a pupil to return to school after a morning appointment and come to school before an afternoon appointment unless agreed otherwise in advance.

FOLLOWING UP UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

Where we are not provided with a reason for a pupil's absence, we will:

- Phone the pupil's parent/carer on the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason
- Phone the pupil's emergency contacts if we are unable to contact the parent or carer
- Consider conducting a home visit or contacting the police/local authority if we are unable to make any contact
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where a pupil's whereabouts or educational provision cannot be established, or there are concerns that they may be missing education, the school will follow the local authority's CME procedures. A referral will be made when the relevant threshold is met and earlier where safeguarding concerns indicate that immediate action is required.

EDUCATED AT HOME TEMPORARILY

If the student is educated at home temporarily, a home visit would take place in line with this policy and work would be sent for competition. Further information would be explored (medical/social care) daily calls and home visits organized to assist the reintegration back to school (all updates and information will be sent to the home school).

REPORTING TO PARENTS/CARERS

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via written reports at the end of each term.

GRANTING LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events which are unavoidable. Examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, or a housing crisis which prevents attendance. The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

We will consider each application for term-time absence individually and consider the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. We will also want to weigh the above criteria against the child's record and educational progress to minimise the risk of any negative impact. We will consider:

- Previous attendance
- Attainment and progress
- Ability to catch up on any work missed
- Any impending tests, exams or significant school events
- The frequency of any other requests for leave.

Formal requests for leave should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence and will respond accordingly.

LATENESS AND PUNCTUALITY

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day or lesson, they can miss vital work and information. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons for other pupils. Habitual poor punctuality will result in sanctions being applied e.g. a lunchtime or afterschool detention.

How we manage lateness:

- At 8.45 a.m. the school day starts and pupils are expected to be in class at that time
- If a pupil arrives before the register has closed at 9.15 a.m., they will be marked as late using the appropriate code
- If a pupil arrives after 9.30 a.m., the U code will be applied to their attendance record which means they receive an unauthorised absence mark for the morning session. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a penalty notice if the problem persists

If a pupil has a persistent late record, parents/carers may be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer and the Attendance Improvement Programme Officer to resolve the problem. Parents/carers can approach the school at any time if they experience problems getting their child to school on time.

LEGAL SANCTIONS

The school or local authority can issue penalty notices for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. A penalty notice is issued to each parent, for each child and they must each pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority will consider prosecution.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160, with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.

If a third offence is committed, a fixed penalty notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court for prosecution. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

The local authority may also decide to put formal support in place such as an Education Supervision Order, or by intensifying support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence is below 50%.

The local authority may also decide to prosecute parents when all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a Parenting Order, which means parents must attend parenting classes. Convicted parents also have to do what the court says to improve their child's school attendance in order to secure their engagement with support. In addition, parents may be fined up to £2,500, be given a Community Order or a jail sentence up to 3 months.

Penalty Notices can be issued by the Headteacher, Local Authority or the Police for.

- Overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps)
- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the school register has closed)
- Where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours during the first five days of exclusion.

A notice to improve letter can be issued by the school or the local authority. This letter sets out a period of time (3-6 weeks) during which time no unauthorised absence should be recorded. If an unauthorised absence is recorded during this period a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent*/carer per child).

*Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent, but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. This includes:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION (CME)

Where a child is missing from education for 10 school days that are unexplained, or if a family moves away from the area or out of the country but does not register with another school, we will alert the Local Authority who will then act according to the CME policy and procedures. Movement of children between local authorities and schools is tracked nationally.

RELATED GUIDANCE AND LEGISLATION

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026) Working together to improve school attendance 2026

School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures (2026) Parental responsibility measures attendance census 2026

Children Missing Education (2025) children missing education statutory guidance 2025

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) Keeping Children safe in education 2026

Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance 2025

Behavior in Schools (2024) Behaviour in schools 2024

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (2026) Suspensions and permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools academies and pupil referral units in England including pupil movement 2026

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2017) Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions 2017)

Equality Act 2010 Equality act 2010 guidance

The Education Act 1996, Part 6
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/444

The Education Act 2002, Part 3
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents

Fines for parent for taking children out of school 2024 Fines for parents for taking children out of school 2024

Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (2023)

Mental health issues affecting a pupils attendance guidance for schools 2023

Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (2023)Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance 2023

Appendix 1: **Attendance Codes September 2024**

Present **Authorised Absence** **Unauthorised Absence**

Not required to attend/not a possible attendance and does not affect attendance score

Code	Mark	Description/Notes
/		Present morning session -pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration
\		Present afternoon session
B		Attending any other approved educational activity (other than sporting activity or work experience). Offsite, but supervised by a member of staff
C		Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
C1		**Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or certain employment circumstances**
C2		**Absent with leave because the pupil is of compulsory school age and is subject to a temporary part-time timetable.**
D		**Attending another school at which the pupil is registered.**
E		**Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made.**
G		**Absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday.**
I		Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J1		Absence to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
K		Attending education provision arranged by the LA other than the school or another school that the pupil is registered. **School must record the nature of the provision**
L		Late arrival before the register closes
M		Absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appt.
N		**Absent – circumstances not yet established.**
O		Absent in other or unknown circumstances
P		Participating in a sporting activity, offsite but supervised by a member of staff
Q		**Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements by the local authority to facilitate their attendance.**
R		Religious observance
S		Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T		Parent travelling for occupational purposes
U		**Absent for registration – arrived in school after registration closed.**
V		Attending an educational visit or trip, must be arranged by school and supervised by a member of school staff
W		Attending an approved educational activity this is work experience, arranged by school or the LA.
X		Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend
Y1		Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2		Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3		Unable to attend due to part of the schools premises being closed
Y4		Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5		Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6		Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7		**Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. Use only where an unavoidable emergency has prevented attendance. The school must record the nature of the unavoidable cause.**
Z		**Pupil's name entered in advance of start date (not collected in the school census).**

Appendix 2: **Attendance Ladder**

