



Hilpertone Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

# Attendance Policy

Policy Ratified: November 2024  
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Policy Reviewed by: Teaching and Learning  
Policy Ratified by: Teaching and Learning

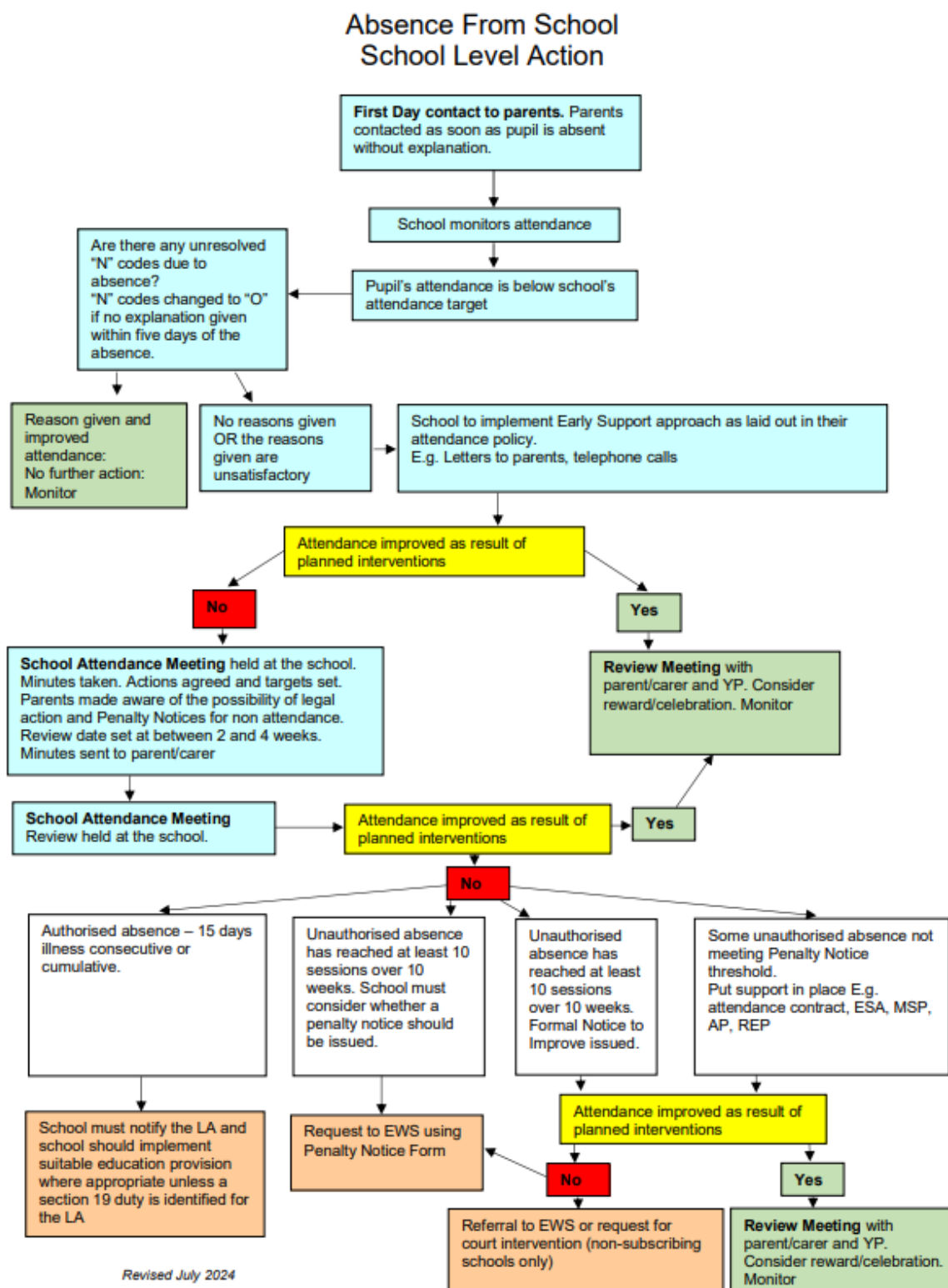
**This is a non-statutory policy**

**This Policy is from Collaborative Schools Limited (CSL) and includes Wiltshire guidance**

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Taken from Wiltshire Education Welfare Service – Managing Attendance

This flow chart explains how attendance is now managed in school and the local authority following Department for Education legislation.



### **Rationale**

Regular attendance is an essential foundation of raising pupil attainment. Absence from school can seriously disrupt pupils' continuity of learning. Not only do they miss out on taught lessons, but many children find it difficult to catch up academically and socially when they return to school.

- 95% attendance equates to half a day off every two weeks for a whole year
- 90% attendance equates to a day off every two weeks for a whole year
- 85% attendance equates to one and a half days off every two weeks for a whole year
- 80% attendance equates to one whole day off every week for a whole year
- A secondary age pupil whose attendance is 80% will have missed ONE WHOLE YEAR of education by the time they leave school
- Poor or irregular attendance places children at risk, can contribute to contextual safeguarding and welfare concerns and in some cases can result in them being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour and exposure to exploitation.

**This policy should be read and understood in with reference to the following documents:**

#### **School policies:**

- Admissions
- Behaviour Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Management of Bullying
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- School's Accessibility Plan
- Single Equality
- Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Offer
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

#### **National guidance:**

- [Working together to improve school attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities \(DfE published 05/2022, updated 08/2024\)](#)
- [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(DfE published 08/2024\)](#)
- [Guidance for parents on school attendance – Office of the Children's Commissioner](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 09/2024\)](#)
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school \(DfE 05/13, updated 12/23\)](#)
- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance \(DfE 02/23\)](#)
- [Children missing education \(DfE 08/24\)](#)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school \(DfE pub 09/14, last updated 08/17\)](#)
- [Suspensions and permanent exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement \(DfE first pub 06/2012, last updated 08/2024\)](#)
- [National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence – implementation guide for local authorities](#)

#### **Local guidance:**

- [Wiltshire LA 'Attendance and behaviour - parents advice and support' including information on requesting leave of absence and penalty notices](#)
- [Wiltshire LA: 'Children Missing from Education – guidance for schools \(09/20\)](#)
- Educational Welfare Services guidance, including model letters and forms
- Attendance Strategy for Wiltshire 2023 -25 (PDF available from [Right Choice](#))
- Leave of Absence Request Form (available on the school website or from the school office)

- Protocol for schools when a child has not been collected as expected by parents<sup>1</sup> at the end of the school day (available on the school website or from the school office)

### **Legal framework**

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration Act) (England) Regulations 2006 (and all subsequent amendments)
- The Equality Act 2010

### **Policy Statement:**

- Education prepares children for life, is precious and is a right to which every child is entitled.
- Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.
- Regular attendance is an essential foundation for raising pupil attainment. Absence from school can seriously disrupt pupils' continuity of learning. Not only do they miss out on taught lessons, but many children find it difficult to catch up when they return to school.
- Without regular attendance, a child cannot be expected to realise their potential, nor will they be able to participate confidently alongside their peers.
- Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. The school is committed to equality of opportunity for all its pupils and will work in partnership with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place, thus enabling all children to maximise their attendance and their access to the curriculum.
- For more complex cases, the ethos of the ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) guidance is that pupils and families should receive holistic, whole-family support to help them overcome the barriers to attendance they are facing.
- Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with the school's efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources including pupil premium.
- The Governing Body of the school expects all staff to place high priority on punctuality and attendance by pupils in partnership with parents.

### **Aims of this policy**

- To ensure that children and young people make the best use of their educational opportunities by attending school regularly, punctually and in a state of readiness for learning.
- To set out the legal framework and to explain the roles and responsibilities of the Local Authority (LA) and the Education Welfare Service (EWS)
- To ensure that everyone within the school community understands their responsibilities in promoting excellent attendance and punctuality.
- To outline procedures for parents when absence is unavoidable.
- To outline procedures for parents when requesting an 'authorised absence'.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Parent/s' means all natural parents, whether they are married or not, any person who has responsibility for a child or young person and any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

- To outline procedures for the school when absence is not explained.
- To outline procedures for the school when a child's attendance / lateness is a cause for concern.
- To outline the procedures when a child cannot be collected from school at the normal time.

### **The Legal Framework**

- This policy is written in the light of guidance from the [Department for Education \(DfE\) 'Working together to improve school attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' \(08/2024\)](#) which in turn is informed by national legislation and therefore reflects the school's statutory duties.
- The school will also ensure that it complies with an additional guidance issued by the DfE as a result of exceptional circumstances and will update parents accordingly.
- The school works in partnership with the LA School Attendance Support Team (which includes the EWS) to support parents in maintaining high levels of school attendance.
- The school recognises the responsibilities of the LA School Attendance Support Team and the EWS and supports them in the discharging of the statutory duty of the LA in respect of non-attendance at school.
- Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents must ensure their children are educated. For most parents this means registering their child at a school and ensuring their regular attendance. 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. Failure to do so can result in the issue of a 'Penalty Notice' or being prosecuted.
- The school understands its responsibilities with regard to the contents of the 'Admission Register' and the 'Attendance Register' and that, by law, schools are required:
  - to keep an up to date 'Admissions Register' complete with details of every child admitted to the school, in line with their legal requirements and to inform the LA in the event of a pupil's name being deleted from the school for reasons outlined in current legislation.<sup>2</sup>
  - to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session (8:40-8:50am) and once during the afternoon (1:00-1:10pm)
  - to report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for ten school days or more without a known reason
  - provide specific pupil information to the DfE as requested
- By law the attendance register must show, for every session, whether a pupil is present, absent, attending approved educational activity or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- An 'authorised absence' is where the school has given approval, in advance, for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for the absence. All other absences are unauthorised.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and that the best outcomes for pupils will be achieved when all parties work together to secure excellent attendance.

### **Working together to improve attendance:**

- Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance at home, in school or more broadly, requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, and not against, families. All partners should work together to:
  - **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.

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<sup>2</sup> As detailed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

- **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 understand barriers to attendance and to 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 any barriers outside of school. This might include early help or a 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.

### **Expectations of the school:<sup>3</sup>**

- All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. This is the responsibility of all members of our school community and we set high expectations for every pupil, which are clearly communicated to parents and pupils. This means that we:
  - build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them
  - develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
  - have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand
  - accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have an effective day to day process in place to follow up absences
  - regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place
  - share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe
  - be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health of their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.
- Our school attendance target is 96%

### **Responsibilities:**

- A useful summary of the specific responsibilities of parents, schools, governors and local authorities can be found in the guidance [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(DfE published 08/2024\)](#)
- This summary covers all pupils but in addition, makes particular reference to those with SEND, specific medical conditions and pupils who are supported by a social worker.
- The sections below outline the key responsibilities for parents, schools and the school's governing body, including, the information that the school requires and the procedures that need to be followed by parents both in reporting an absence and requesting an absence during term time. In addition we explain the role we will take in monitoring your child's attendance.

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<sup>3</sup> The DfE guidance '[Working together to improve school attendance \(2024\)](#)' addresses each of these bullet points in greater detail.

- As a school and when necessary, we work collaboratively with local partners including other schools (which any siblings might attend), the LA, the local community (including voluntary and community groups) the health service and the police to ensure that we are doing all we can to support parents and pupils to tackle problems of poor attendance. In addition, there are certain legal requirements that we are required to share with the local authority, social workers and 'Virtual Heads' regarding persistent absence and the removal of a pupil's name from the attendance register.

### **Responsibilities of parents:**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents who have chosen to have their child educated at school have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance.

This means:

- to work in partnership with the school to take an active interest in their child's school career; to reinforce the school policies, arrangements on homework, behaviour and approach to learning; to attend parents' evenings and other meetings where necessary and, where practicable, for parents to provide the school with more than one emergency contact number (for two different adults) for their child/children and for the parent with whom the child/children reside for the majority of the time to be responsible for ensuring those numbers are kept up to date
- ensuring that their child arrives at school on time (not before xxx am and not after xxx am) and that they are collected on time (details of collection times if they differ e.g. in Primary between Key Stages). Morning registration takes place at 8:50am. Registers will be kept open for 10 minutes from this time. If a pupil arrives after registers have 'closed' they will be recorded as 'absent'
- ensuring that their child arrives appropriately dressed and in a 'condition to learn' (i.e. not too tired or too hungry)
- only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance
- to avoid arranging medical or dental appointments during school hours wherever possible
- where there are problems with attendance and punctuality, parents are expected to work in partnership with the school, and any other agencies (as appropriate) to help to resolve the problems relating to non-attendance and to proactively engage with the support offered them to prevent the need both for more formal and/or legal intervention, and
- to acknowledge receipt of the school's 'Attendance Policy' (*shared as part of parent induction for reception and in information packs for new starters who move between reception and Year 6*)

### **Procedures for reporting late arrival or absence:**

- When parents are aware that their child is going to be late for school, they should notify the school as early as is reasonably possible..
- In the event of illness or any other reason for absence, parents should contact the school office before 9.00am on the first day of the absence. There is a dedicated messaging service to report absences that can be accessed 24 hours a day. It is also possible to report an absence by email to [admin@hilperton.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hilperton.wilts.sch.uk)
- Parents should provide an explanation for the absence, which should then be confirmed in writing when the child returns to school.
- If the absence is to continue for more than one day, parents should contact the school on subsequent days, again before 9.00am, unless they are able to give an exact length of time on the first day of absence.
- Parents need to inform the school if a child's absence is due to some traumatic event which the school needs to deal with sensitively so that the school can respond appropriately to the emotional needs of the child on their return to school.
- Where the school has not been notified of a child's absence, parents will be telephoned to confirm that a child is absent and the reasons for that absence. If it is not possible to speak

directly with parents, we will then make contact with the nominated emergency contacts to try and establish the reason for absence.

- Where the school has not been notified and it is not possible to contact parents, or their nominated emergency contacts, to establish the reason for absence, the school is obliged to mark the child's absence as 'unauthorised'.
- Parents should ensure that they sign their child in and/or out if they arrive at school outside normal hours or are taken out of school before the normal end of the day, giving the reason for lateness or early withdrawal from school. This signing in/out e-book (iPad) is kept inside the main door by the school office.
- Parents are asked to ensure that their child (where age appropriate) is fully aware of the procedures they must follow in the event that they are late for school.

#### **Collecting your child from school:**

- We ask that all parents ensure that they are able to collect their children from school on time.
- If parents are unable to collect their child as usual, then they will need to communicate the alternative arrangements that they have made with the school as early as possible. We will not release children unless such advice has been received.
- If children remain uncollected, we will follow the procedures as outlined in the 'Wiltshire Protocol' a copy of which can be downloaded from the school website or obtained in hard copy from the school office.

#### **Procedures for requesting 'authorised absence' from school**

- Parents must seek permission from the Head Teacher (or authorised representative) by submitting a written application in advance of any request for leave of absence.
- A leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances for example a family emergency, a funeral of a close family member or a wedding of a close family member.
- Inevitably there will be occasions when absence is unavoidable or justifiable, these will include:
  - illness
  - medical/dental appointments (where it has not been possible to arrange one out of school hours)
  - days of religious observance
  - visits to other schools (secondary transfer, entrance exams)
  - education off-site for specific reasons as outlined in 'Working together to improve school attendance' page 18 section 41
  - approved sporting activity performance
  - a temporary, time limited part-time timetable for exceptional reasons where the times and dates are agreed in advance
  - annual family holiday in exceptional circumstances
- Where an absence is unavoidable or unplanned, then parents are asked to follow the procedures for reporting absences as outlined above.
- In order to request an authorised approval for absence in term time for exceptional circumstances (as outlined above) parents need to complete an 'Absence from School' form, which is available from the school office or can be downloaded from the school's website. Forms need to be handed into the school office **at least two weeks in advance** so that they can be processed.
- We do not give retrospective agreements for leave of absence, so any absence not advised to the school in advance will be unauthorised
- Requests will be considered by the Head Teacher and parents will be advised if their request has been authorised.
- Any pupil who has taken an authorised term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence if they are ill in a period directly before or after the dates advised to school.

- Parents will be asked to provide evidence if a pupil does not return to school on the agreed date following a holiday as a result of delayed or cancelled flights or other travel arrangements.
- Where an unauthorised leave of absence is taken, parents may be issued with a penalty notice (see page 9 below).

### **Responsibilities of the School**

- The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that the policy is effectively implemented and communicated to parents and for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- The school will ensure that all parents are made aware of this policy *e.g. website, newsletter, parent induction*.
- **The Head Teacher is the senior attendance champion** and is responsible for developing coherent whole school systems for improving attendance including supportive interventions involving other agencies if necessary. Email: [admin@hilperton.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hilperton.wilts.sch.uk)
- The administrative assistant responsible for attendance and absence will ensure that data is monitored and circulated regularly and liaises with the Head Teacher, the Deputy Head Teacher and the EWS on any attendance issues causing concern. Agreed procedures will be implemented by the team for pupils whose attendance falls below 90%.
- Through our regular monitoring of attendance and absence data we will analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and their families. This will involve us looking not only at the attendance data (including their punctuality) for individual pupils, but also cohorts and groups of pupils across the school to inform us and help us achieve our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- We will use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers (as well as any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupils premium leads as required) in order for us to focus on those pupils and develop targeted actions to support their needs.
- We work jointly with our LA and other local partners to share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to the pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms) as well as holding regular 'Targeting Support Meetings' to discuss pupil attendance.
- In order ensure that we can arrange appropriate support to parents and pupils as early as possible, we are also legally required to share information with the LA on additions and deletions from the school register; attendance returns (including providing the LA with the full names and addresses of all pupils who fail to attend school regularly or been absent for a continuous period of 10 days where that absence is unauthorised and sickness returns (including providing the LA with the names and addresses of all pupils recorded as ill who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness).
- We will monitor the effectiveness of any intervention and support so that we are able to improve upon the kind of support that we offer and the strategies that we have implemented.
- Teachers are responsible for ensuring that an accurate register is taken at the designated time. All teachers challenge lateness and set high standards of punctuality themselves.
- Where any follow up action is taken by teachers, accurate records must be kept and copies placed on individual pupil records.

### **Pupils with medical conditions (physical or mental health ill health) and/or special educational needs and disabilities**

- Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided.

- In cases of both long term physical or mental ill health, school staff are not expected to diagnose or treat physical or mental conditions, but they are expected to work with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for every pupil.
- It is important that parents of children with specific medical conditions or SEND contact the school to discuss any concerns they might have which could potentially have an impact on their child's attendance at school so that we can work in partnership with parents.
- Further details on the school's approach to levels of support that both the school and the local authority can offer can be found in the school's policies on "Supporting pupils with medical conditions who cannot attend school" and our "SEND offer", copies of which can be found on the school's website or requested in hard copy format from the school office.
- More detailed information can also be found in the DfE guidance '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' (2024) pages 23 – 26) and the [DfE Guidance "Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school"](#)
- In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for the school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than a full-time education, through a temporary part-time timetable, in order to meet their individual needs. Where a pupil has an education health care plan, this will be discussed with the local authority and where the pupil has a social worker, the social worker will be kept informed.

### **Reintegration following a long term absence:**

#### **Concerns over attendance, punctuality and 'unauthorised absences'**

- Early identification is crucial and communication with parents needs to begin as soon as a problem is detected. Together with pupils and parents, we will work to understand and address the reasons for absence, both in-school barriers and any barriers that exist outside school, involving, where necessary, the support of additional local partners and external agencies.
- As a school we have a range of options available to us:
  - Voluntary early help plan
  - Attendance contracts
  - Education Supervision Order
  - Attendance prosecution
  - Parenting order
  - Penalty notice
- Our preference is to work in partnership with parents on a voluntary basis (by putting in place a voluntary early help plan and/or an attendance contract), but also have a range of more formal and legal steps we can take.
- A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee (PA) when they miss 10% or more of schooling across the school year and as a severe absentee (SA) if they miss more than 50% (whether it be authorised or unauthorised). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.
- Through our weekly monitoring of registers we will be able to identify pupils with low attendance and/or patterns of absences that may lead to PA, which could be one or a combination of many forms of absence such as: regular absence on a particular day of the week, broken weeks, persistent lateness, or too many authorised or unauthorised absences.
- Absence is recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded and 'unauthorised'. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered 'unauthorised' and may be taken into account if any legal action is taken.
  - Initial concerns will either be communicated in person, by phone or by letter (if in person or by phone this should be followed up by a letter), explaining the actions that might be taken

should the problem persist and seeing if the school can offer any support to the parents to resolve the problem.

We will contact parents to address and improve attendance where:

- a pupil's attendance falls below 95%
- a pupil has more than 3 weeks where they haven't achieved full attendance in a term (on the basis of 6 terms in a year)
- a pupil has more than 4 recorded lates in a term
- a pupil has a regular pattern of absence
- The school is obliged to report any concerns regarding attendance (including persistent late arrival) and absence to the LA EWS.
- Where a pupil has a social worker allocated to them, we are obliged to notify their social worker if there are any unexplained absences and/or if the pupil's name is to be deleted from the register.
  - If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and no contact has been made with the school, a home visit will be made by a member of the school staff to ascertain the safety and well-being of your child and to establish the reason for absence from school.
- After 10 days of unexplained absence and no contact with the school, we are obliged to notify the LA. The LA will follow the procedure for '[Children Missing Education](#)' (CME) and parents may expect contact and visits from an EWO to ascertain the well-being and safety of your child.<sup>4</sup>
- We will make every effort to work constructively and sympathetically with parents to respond to their individual circumstances.
- Where appropriate, the school may develop, along with parents, a "voluntary early help plan" or request that the parents enter into a more formal, but voluntary 'attendance contract' which sets out what is expected of the parents, the pupil and school. The school's approach is outlined in the section above on "Working together to improve attendance" and more detailed information about attendance contracts can be found in the DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' (pages 48 – 50)
- Where, despite our best efforts, neither of these voluntary approaches prove to be successful, it may be necessary for us to use more formal procedures as outlined below:
  - **Education supervision orders (ESO):** a formal and legal intervention without criminal prosecution which is only used when all voluntary and less formal procedures have been exhausted and where it is believed that this would be a beneficial step both for pupil and parent(s). ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure that the pupil receives an efficient full time and suitable education (see pages 51-52 of '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' for more information).
  - **Attendance prosecution:** prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed and the decision to prosecute can only be taken by the LA, who must also fund all associated costs. This may mean the imposition of a significant fine (see pages 52-55 of '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' for more information).
  - **Parenting orders:** an additional order that can be imposed by the court and which may be appropriate where a parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance and where compulsion to do so would help change parental behaviour (see pages 55 of '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' for more information).
  - **Penalty notices:** can be issued by the LA to parent(s) when a pupil has missed a minimum of 10 sessions (5 school days) due to unauthorised absences within a rolling 10 week period.

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<sup>4</sup> Any concern of a 'Child Missing Education' should be reported to the LA through the EWS. Notifications should be sent to [pupilmove@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:pupilmove@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Absences can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (e.g. holidays, arriving late after the register is closed) and the 10 week period may span different terms or school years. A maximum of 2 penalty notices can be issued within a 3 year period, after which another tool will need to be considered, such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions.

- A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences, which is usually those with day to day responsibility who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent may have applied for the absence in cases where an application has been made).
- They are issued as an alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age has attended school regularly. They should only be used in cases where support is not appropriate (e.g. a long term holiday) or where any support already put in place has not worked or has not been engaged with.
- The option of using a 'Notice to Improve' is also available where support is still viewed as appropriate but not working or being engaged with, and is intended to give a parent a final opportunity to engage in support before they are issued with a penalty notice. Further information on what a 'Notice to Improve' should include can be found in the [National Framework](#) (page 5).
- A penalty notice is intended to prevent the need for court action and must be in line with [National Framework](#) and the LA code of conduct. The LA can issue a penalty notice in the following circumstances:
  - overt truancy
  - absence from school, either when a parent continually fails to provide an explanation or the school considers the absence to be avoidable
  - holidays taken during term time where the absence has not been authorised by the school
  - absence taken during term time where the leave of absence has not been authorised by the school, or an absence has not been requested in advance
  - when an excluded child is present in a public place during school hours on a day which is one of the first five school days of that exclusions or, where the exclusion is for a fixed period of five days or less, any of the days of that exclusion period.
- For further information, please click on the LA link: ['Attendance and behaviour'](#) and then scroll down to the section on 'Penalty Notices'.
- The penalty is £160 per child per parent if paid within 28 days but is reduced to £80 per child per parent if paid within the first 21 days. However, should a second penalty notice be issued within 3 years from the first, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160 with no option to pay the reduced rate of £80.

### **Strategies for improving and maintain good attendance:**

#### **Responsibilities of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body should:

- recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- ensure school leaders fulfil expectation and statutory duties
- regularly review attendance data, discuss (and challenge) trends and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance

#### **Policy Review**

- This policy will be reviewed every 2 years ,or earlier where there is an update to the DfE guidance.