Attendance Policy

Thomas Hall School

Policy:	**Attendance**			
Date of Issue:	**October 2026**	**Date of Review:**	**September 2028**	
Signed:	**Headteacher:**	**Charlotte Webster**	**Chair of LGB:**	**Nick Buckland**
Attendance Team:	**Adam Green**	**Sam Rose**	**Katrina Campbell**	**Julia Wood**
Class teachers, teaching assistants and any other member of the school community (including governors), will be happy to support and advise on school attendance. For any specific enquiries, please contact Sam Rose – sam.rose@thomashallschool.org				

United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
Article 28 *(right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights.*
Article 29 *(goals of education) Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.*

Introduction

What is Attendance?

As a school we recognise the clear connection between regular attendance and achievement and will, therefore, work in partnership with parents/carers, the school's governing body and the Local Authority to ensure that pupils achieve maximum possible attendance, raise standards and promote punctuality of all pupils. Good attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. School attendance is the amount of time your child/ren attends Thomas Hall school. Pupils need to attend school in order to benefit from their education. Every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and for parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their child/ren attend. This includes child/ren being punctual (arriving on time), as well as in attendance. In order for children to access and flourish from the full curriculum, they need to be in full-time, on-time attendance.

By law, every child between the ages 5-16 must receive a suitable full-time education. (Section 9, Education Act (1996). As a parent you are responsible for making sure your child attends school every day. Setting a good example of attendance at an early age will help your child later in life. Being on time is as vital. Arriving late at school can be disruptive for your child, their teacher, and the other pupils in class.

Legislation & Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's guidance,

Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

The Education Act 1996 states that:

- All pupils of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- The Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school.
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session.
- The school must report to the Local Authority pupils who are absent for more than ten days without explanation.
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities.
- Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law.

Education Act 1996 (legislation.gov.uk) - Part 6

Education Act 2002 (legislation.gov.uk) - Part 3

Aims

- We believe that attending school, on time, is key to enabling children to make the most of the opportunities we offer to prepare them for their future.
- Every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. Attending school regularly promotes the wellbeing, welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers.
- To listen, understand, empathise, and support – but not tolerate non-attendance.
- We will work in partnership with our families to identify the reasons for any poor attendance, supporting them in addressing any barriers to attendance for their child.
- Promoting good attendance is a matter for the whole school community. This policy sets out our expectations and our approach and is in line with the Department for Education's latest guidance (August 19th 2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance.'
- Maintain high levels of attendance and minimise persistent absence (below 90%)
- Create a culture in which good attendance is expected as the norm
- To maintain effective communication regarding attendance between home and school
- Demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school
- This policy will be applied consistently and fairly. In applying this policy, we will take into account the needs of individual pupils.
- This policy is supported by other school policies and procedures e.g., admissions, safeguarding and child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour and all-inclusive practice within school.

Aims of Attendance Targets/Attendance Registers

- To keep whole school attendance in line with national averages for schools within similar contexts, with planned aspiration for improvement.
- *The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in Court cases.*

Expectations

It is our responsibility, as parents/ carers and school, to establish and maintain a culture that promotes good attendance which is supported by consistently applied systems. Our dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for attendance is Adam Green, our parent liaison for attendance is Sam Rose and it is all staff,

children and parents/ carers responsibility to champion attendance. Parents/ carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, by regular attendance at school.

School's Commitment

- We commit to having open, honest communication regarding attendance with parents.
- We will strive to build positive working relationships rooted in kindness but honesty where there are tough messages which may need to be shared.
- We commit to always working in partnership with parents to maintain the highest expectations of your child's attendance and ensuring that they attend school and are punctual to lessons in order for them to access their full educational entitlement.
- We commit to supporting parents with attendance
- We commit to sharing what good attendance looks like and discuss with you any misconceptions or misunderstandings you may have in order to work together for your child/ren to attend school in order to provide them with the best chances of achieving well.
- We commit to having unwavering dedication to and a relentless approach to ensuring your child/ren are in school and on time. This involves rewarding children for excellent attendance and tackling poor attendance as appropriate. We will do so by communicating attendance with not only families, but with children too, encouraging their success in school and paying attention to achieving our school targets for attendance.
- We commit to ensuring we meet the UN Conventions of the Rights of a Child for education and in order to do so, establish strong attendance routines.

We expect all our parents to:

- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
- Report all absences, illness and medical appointments to the school before 8:15am via email attendance@thomashallschool.org or by calling 01392 757371 and choosing option 1, please provide an expected date of return.
- Avoid unnecessary absences. For example, non-emergency medical/ dental appointments should take place outside of school hours.
- Inform us of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support us by becoming involved in their child's education, acknowledging the value of education and the importance of children receiving the same messages from home and school
- Work with us to address any barriers to attendance for their child including attending all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.
- Follow the Table of Responsibilities for Attendance – (See on Page 9 Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance__applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf)
- Supporting school in delivering this consistently well so each and every child receives a full and rounded education for the maximum time available to them.

Daily Routines:

- At Thomas Hall School, our staff meet and greet our pupils at the school gate/ school office and playground, upon arrival. This begins at 08:30 each day.
- Attendance registers are taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session.
- Our school day begins at 08:45 for Primary and 09:00 for Secondary. The morning register will open and be taken at 08:45 for primary students, and 09:00 for those in the secondary school. Any pupil arriving after 09:00 (Primary & Secondary) is required to report to the main school office to sign in and provide a reason for lateness. This will be recorded on Arbor.
- If a student arrives after 09:00, they will be marks as L (late).
- If a child arrives after the school register officially closes at 0930, they receive U code (unauthorised absence) and will not receive a morning registration mark for the AM session.
- Our Primary afternoon session begins at 13:10 with a register taken at this time.

- Our Secondary afternoon session begins at 13:30 with a register taken at this time.
- Our normal Primary school day ends at 1515 (1500 for students in Reception)
- Our normal Secondary school day ends at 1530

Absence and Reporting Absence:

What is Absence?

School absence is the time your child/ren spend away from Thomas Hall School when they are scheduled to attend. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. Whilst we understand sometimes absences are necessary; the vast majority of absences can be planned outside of the school day as there are 170 non-school days per year.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for your child to be away from school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. An authorised absence is still classed as an absence from school as the child is/was not in attendance. Authorised absences include medical appointments where medical evidence has been submitted. There are 170 non-school days per year, therefore we always strongly encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. On your child's Arbor profile, an authorised absence will be marked as (I/ M)- Illness or Medical.

Authorised absence is defined as:

- Genuine illness
- Medical or dental appointment (where possible routine appointments should be arranged out of school time)
- Bereavement – (Headteacher's discretion)
- Religious observance (The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong)
- Approved leave in term time where there are exceptional circumstances, as agreed by the Headteacher.
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has granted leave of absence

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Examples of unauthorised absences include holiday; reason for absence not yet provided; absent from school without authorisation or arrived in school after registration closed. An unauthorised absence is an absence from school as the child was not in attendance. On your child's Arbor profile, an unauthorised absence will be marked as (0).

Unauthorised absence is defined as:

- Being late after the registers have closed - 'U' code
- Going shopping or having a haircut
- Where no explanation is offered by the parent or carer
- Where the school is not satisfied with an explanation offered
- Special occasions e.g. birthdays/weddings
- Holidays/leave in term time
- Taking the rest of the day off before or after a medical appointment
- Translating for family members
- Visiting sick relatives
- Exceptional term time leave longer than agreed by the Headteacher

Requests for Holidays in Term Time

The headteacher will not grant a holiday in term time. There are 170 non-school days per year and therefore all holidays should be booked during this time. Legislation does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. If you take your child out of school during term time you could be fined.

Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, the headteacher may warrant a short period of leave where an application had been made in advance in writing and the headteacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. Any exceptional circumstances granted will still be recorded as a school absence, even if authorised

Religious Observance

Children may take 1 day for religious observance. This must fall on a day exclusively set aside for the religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

Impact of Absence:

Descriptor	Threshold %	Days Attendance	Whole Days Absence	Learning Hours Lost
Excellent	100% 99%	190 days 188 days	0 2	0 10
Good	98% 97% 96% 95%	186 days 184 days 182.5 days 180.5 days	4 6 7.5 9.5	20 30 37.5 47.5
Concern	94% 93% 92% 91%	179 days 177 days 175 days 173 days	11 13 15 17	55 65 75 85
Unsatisfactory	90% 89% 88% 87%	171 days 169 days 167 days 165 days	19 21 23 25	95 105 115 125
Serious Cause for Concern	86%	163 days	27	135
Critical	85% 84% 83% 82% 81% 80%	161.5 days 159.5 days 158 days 156 days 154 days 152 days	28.5 30.5 32 34 36 38	142.5 152.5 160 170 180 190

Impact of Lateness:

Minutes late per day	= days of lost learning each year
5	3.2
10	6.5
15	9.5

20	**12.5**
30	**19**

Reporting Absence:

1. If a child is absent from school, parents must contact Sam Rose in the school office on 01392 757371 or via email (attendance@thomashallschool.org) by 08:30 on the first day of absence, providing a reason for the absence and the expected date of return. Any evidence eg: medical letters may also be provided. The office staff may request that you call each consecutive day with an update on your child's attendance and well-being or you may still receive a call/ visit from school even if you have contacted school to report the absence.

2. If the absence continues unexpectedly beyond the above given date, parents should contact Sam Rose in the school office, each day of absence after this date, to identify the reason for absence and the expected date of return.

3. Where absence is recorded as unexplained, a reason for the absence must be obtained, by no later than 5 school days after the session.

4. If a child is absent, and we have had no contact from the parent to provide a reason for the absence, we will follow the actions outlined in the table below.

How we Address Lowering or Low Attendance to Secure Good Attendance

As a school, we want to work closely with parents to help and support all pupils to stay in the 'green zone'. You may be invited into school for a meeting if your child's attendance falls into the amber or red category. (Please see the table above).

Managing Attendance

We will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance, highlighting any amount of time missed and the impact on learning:

- Parents receive an attendance communication, every time their child drops into an attendance banding below 95%.
- Parents receive termly reports from their child's teacher, including an attendance report. Parents can also attend an annual meet the teacher meeting with information about attendance.
- Parents are invited to meetings with the inclusion team regarding their child's attendance.

Tiered letters for absence %

Stage 1 - Attendance Connection Opportunity	Attendance drops below 95% Our team will contact you via email to raise a concern and arrange a call to discuss how we can support your child attend school. We will then provide a monitoring period and review point.
Stage 2 – Supportive Attendance meeting	Attendance remains below 95% - 94.9% - 90% Our team will invite parents and students to a formal and supportive meeting to review supportive mechanisms currently in place and what else the school can do to support good attendance. We will set achievable and supportive targets to positively impact attendance.
Stage 3 - Attendance Escalation	Attendance continues to decline warning at risk of Persistent Absence level or at Persistent Absence level (below 90%) and referral to Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Our Approach to Attendance Management

Our approach to attendance management is based on the principles of prevention, early intervention and targeted support. At all stages we aim to work in partnership with parents/ carers to address any barriers to attendance and/ or punctuality together. Where support is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Examples of prevention, early intervention and targeted support are outlined below.

Prevention	Early intervention	Targeted Support	Statutory Action
Clear Policy Clear systems Processes communicated to parents effectively. High Profile Promotion of good attendance. Broad and balanced engaging curriculum offer. Discussion with parents and pupils Family Learning Reward systems Inclusion resources Additional learning support Behaviour support PSHE curriculum	Trauma-informed approaches Early help Signposting supporting transition into school Reintegration support packages Anxiety-based school avoidance resources – Anna Freud Parent face to face meetings if at risk of PA – Pastoral Team support	Attendance panel meeting – Attendance Contract Team Around the Child Approach – pupils in year transfer – previous attendance issues. Referrals to support agencies e.g. MAST Time limited part-time timetables following RSAT guidance– with LA support/Parent consent.	Work with the local authority to use the full range of legal interventions available to us to protect our pupils' right to an education. These are: Attendance Contracts Notice to Improve Education supervision orders Attendance prosecution Parenting orders Fixed penalty notices

Decisions on which interventions are to take will be made on a case-by-case basis after considering the individual circumstances of the family, however the decisions will be guided heavily by the graduated approach for attendance (see appendix), contextual and education needs of the child and all decisions will be made in line with attendance legislation and school policies.

Prevention, Intervention and Support:

We will regularly analyse attendance data, using an in-depth attendance tracker, to identify pupils who have consistently high attendance, those who have shown improvements in their attendance and to identify pupils who may be vulnerable. We will also analyse specific groups, classes, year groups to inform our strategy in promoting good attendance. This information is used to by the inclusion team within school and anonymously by Reach South Trust Inclusion Team. Our approach to attendance management is based on prevention, early intervention and targeted support. We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who are at risk of poor attendance, have poor attendance; changes in attendance; are identified as being either persistently absence or severely absent.

- If we have concerns about a pupil's attendance and/ or their punctuality, then we will work in partnership with parents to support improvements. This may involve a meeting in school to support the family in identifying, and addressing, the barriers to attending school and/ or attending school on time.
- We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties and trauma in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help us to identify any

additional support that may be needed. It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with school, to identify the most appropriate support for the child.

- We recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children. We will hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable to discuss attendance at, and engagement with, school.
- Working with parents, we will identify pupils who need support from wider partners and will make the necessary referrals as quickly as possible. With parental consent, this may include exploring Early Help support, or through discussion within a team around the school meeting.
- We will support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- If we have any concerns about the welfare and wellbeing of a pupil then, in line with our safeguarding responsibilities, we will make any necessary referrals.
- If we have been unable to contact the family, and have not seen the pupil, then we will inform the Local Authority so that joint enquiries can be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing in Education procedures.

How We Reward Attendance:

- **Half- Termly Attendance Message to Parents and Attendance Certificates-** children who are in school 100% receive a half-termly message home to parents and an attendance certificate

- **Termly 100% Attendance Celebration**- Each half-term/ date period, children with 100% are invited to an attendance celebration event, for example a pizza party!

- **Golden Ticket Prize Draw** – for each unbroken week of 100% attendance (Mon-Fri) a student has they automatically gain one golden ticket entry to a raffle to win prizes such as cinema vouchers, Deliveroo vouchers, climbing and water sports experiences!

How We Calculate Attendance:

Attendance for a set date period is calculated using school's Arbor attendance system in conjunction with school's inventory sign-in/ sign-out system. Attendance is calculated from the start of the school day to the end of the school day. During this period of time, children will receive x 2 attendance marks: one for the morning session and one for the afternoon session. School attendance is the amount of time your child/ren attends their school setting. School absence is the time your child/ren spend away from school setting when they are scheduled to attend.

Roles & Responsibilities for Parents and Schools:

Headteacher/Principle is responsible for:

- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance – ensuring compliance with Keeping children Safe in Education 2025. Keeping children safe in education 2025

- Developing good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND). Ensuring compliance with Statutory Guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England December 2015 - Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance.
- Ensuring accurate completion of admission and attendance registers.
- Ensuring staff are actively working to maximize attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and whole school attendance.

- Having clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence - pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation/Child Sexual Exploitation/grooming/neglect etc. and this cohort must be made the top priority for action and support. Ensuring all staff are aware of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, Children's Social Care and other statutory safeguarding partners. Often severely absent pupils have additional needs and therefore it is vital that schools ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the pupil's absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.
- Ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- Monitoring and analysing data and trends.
- Reporting to the Governing Body and Trusts the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building and modelling respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families, and other stakeholders to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Open and honest communication with staff, pupils, and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. • Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Sharing information on and working collaboratively with other schools in the area/cluster, LAs, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming severe or persistent.
- Ensuring the school attendance policy is applied fairly and consistently and recognises the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Schools should consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The School Senior Attendance Champion SLT is responsible for:

- Implementing the policy with the Head.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Championing and improving attendance.
- Ensuring the practice that is in place to address persistent and severe absence is robust.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Oversight of data analysis -
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues. This includes, raising concerns with other agencies like children's social care and early help services which are working with families.
- Robust school systems are in place which provide useful data at cohort, group, and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups such as:
    - children who have a social worker including looked-after children
    - young carers
    - children who are eligible for free school meals
    - children who speak English as a second language
    - children who have special educational needs and disabilities
- Keeping the Head and all school staff informed of attendance figures and trends by providing regular reports to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.
- Compiling attendance data for the Head, the Governing Body and the Local Authority.
- Ensuring a positive working relationship with the School Attendance Team is fostered, including attending Attendance Targeted Support Meetings.
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents.
- If required, hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.

- Undertaking home visits in line with school's safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Identifying pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Making sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by pupils and families, implemented consistently and their impact reviewed regularly.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by setting an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- Implementing the policy and ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently.
- Ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date.
- Reviewing class and individual attendance patterns.
- Informing the school attendance champion/line manager of any concerns.
- Emphasising with pupils the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families, and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Communicating openly and honestly with staff, pupils, and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. • Holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or who are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Modelling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:
- treat pupils with dignity
- build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
- take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence
- handle confidential information sensitively
- understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
- communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being
- Rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually.
- Emphasize the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment.
- Promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate pupils to be in the classroom.
- Promote rewards and celebrate progress but continue to outline sanctions.
- Apply rewards and sanctions consistently.
- Follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence.
- Contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality.
- Review form or tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early, and help set targets.
- Periodically review practice and consistency both across and between departments.
- Proactively promote attendance practice as part of staff induction.
- Consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils.

Attendance and pastoral staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring the recording of attendance and absence data is accurate.
- Ensuring robust day-to-day processes are in place.
- Tracking and following up absence and poor punctuality (implement punctuality routines such as late gate or sign in procedures).
- Providing appropriate support and challenge to establish good registration practice.
- Carrying out robust first day calling procedures including priority routines for vulnerable children including children with a social worker. If absence continues without explanation, further contact should be made to ensure safeguarding.
- Identifying any absences that are not explained for each session and contacting parents to understand why, and when the pupil will return to school.
- Where absences are recorded as unexplained in the attendance inputting the correct code as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 school days after the session.
- Keeping parents informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance and absence record (this should be communicated to parents in an easy-to-understand format and percentage headlines should be avoided. For example, concentrate on the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning).
- Holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identifying pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and making the necessary referrals.
- Undertaking home visits in line with safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Identifying and, where possible, mitigating potential barriers to good attendance in liaison with families and relevant support agencies.
- Implementing Children Missing Education (CME) procedures when appropriate.
- Where pupils have additional vulnerabilities, which may require multi-agency meetings trying to arrange those meetings outside of lesson time, where possible.

For pupils at risk of persistent absence

- Providing regular attendance reports to facilitate weekly reviews with leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads) for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
- Initiating and overseeing the administration of absence procedures.
  This should include:

  - letters home
  - attendance clinics
  - engagement with local authorities and other external agencies and partners
  - working with families and the community to identify which methods of communication work best, recognising potential barriers in hard-to-reach families and finding methods that work and are understood
  - consideration as to whether further interventions are required in line with the statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures
  - providing regular reports to leaders on the at-risk cohort
  - providing regular reports/caseloads to local authority attendance team or independent attendance organisations to raise awareness of emerging at-risk pupils

For pupils who are persistently absent

- Developing and implementing persistent absence action plans with pupils and families which address barriers and help establish positive attendance routines.
- Identifying tailored intervention which meets the needs of the pupil.

- Leading daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and impact of support, make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Liaising with school leaders (designated safeguarding, SENDco and pastoral leads) on referrals to external agencies and multi-agency assessments.
- Coordinating and contributing to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions.
- Working in partnership with Attendance Support Team and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures.
- Providing regular reports to leaders on the impact of action plans and interventions.

Working with the Local Authorities Attendance Support Team

- School works in partnership with the statutory Attendance Support Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance through Register Checks and Targeted Support Meetings.
- The Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion (SLT) and the Attendance school staff will meet with an Access and Attendance Officer from the Attendance Support Team when required, to discuss and improve attendance for persistently absent or severely absent pupils.
- Action plans will be developed for persistently and severely absent pupils.
- If parents/carers do not proactively engage with support offered through the action plan, then formal legal intervention may be requested from the Attendance Support Team. Statutory intervention can include:

- Penalty Notices
- Parenting Order
- Education Supervision Order
- Prosecution

This table summarises the attendance responsibilities for parents and schools to support in maintaining high levels of school attendance.

All Pupils	
Parents are expected to:	**Schools are expected to:**
• Ensure their child attends every day the school is open, except when a statutory reason applies. • Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). • Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. • Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.	• Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand. • Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. • Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. • Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. • Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on • Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. At Thomas Hall, this is Charlotte Webster.

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent 94.9%-90%	
Parents are expected to:	**Schools are expected to:**

• Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. • Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.	• Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of 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 and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met. • If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.
Persistently Absent Pupils 90%- Below	
Parents are expected to:	**Schools are expected to:**
• Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. • Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	• Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: • Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. • 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 Pupils 50%-below	
Parents are expected to:	**Schools are expected to:**

• Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. • Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	• Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: • Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance	
Parents are expected to:	**Schools are expected to:**
• Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. • Proactively engage with the support offered.	• Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. • Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. • Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. • Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.
Support for pupils with a social worker and/or youth offending team worker	
Parents are expected to:	**Schools are expected to:**
• Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. • Proactively engage with the support offered.	• Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker and/or youth offending team worker are. • Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort. • Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes. • Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.
Support for Cohorts of Pupils with attendance lower than their peers	
Parents are expected to:	**Schools are expected to:**

Not applicable	• Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. • Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.
Looked after and previously looked after children	
Parents are expected to:	**Schools are expected to:**
• Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans.	• Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.
• Proactively engage with the support offered.	• Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked after children that support good attendance. • Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.

Fixed Penalty Notices (National Framework 2024):

Fixed Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be used by all schools where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences. They should usually only be issued to the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

We will only use a fixed penalty notice, in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2024, where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

Penalty notices must be issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2024, as amended and can only be issued by a headteacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police. They must also be issued in line with Local Codes of Conduct which are drawn up and maintained by each local authority.

National threshold when it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice

The national threshold for issuing a Fixed Penalty is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

When school is aware that the threshold has been met, we will make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case:

• Is support appropriate in this case?

If yes, we will continue with the existing support without a penalty notice or issue a Notice to Improve if that support is not working or is not being engaged with. A penalty notice can be issued if either have not worked.

If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued subject to the other conditions below.

• Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?

• Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?

If the answer to those questions is yes, then a penalty notice should be issued. If not, another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be issued at £160 per parent per child, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. After 21 days and up to 28 days the fine is £160 per parent per child.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

• A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

• The Local Authority is responsible for issuing the Penalty Notices to parents and is responsible for monitoring the collection of any payments.

• Where a Penalty Notice is not paid the parent(s) have not discharged their liability for the offence of unauthorised absence, so the case will automatically proceed to the Magistrates Court unless strong grounds can be proved otherwise.

Fixed penalty notices can 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 fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion the days that the child must not be present in a public place.

Appendix A – Further Information

Graduated Response to Attendance Concerns:

Attendance	Actions
100%-96%	First day phone call regarding attendance from admin team if child is absent, if parent has not already notified the school. If call to school has been made, inclusion/ admin team may call for more information. If unable to contact parent, school will try other emergency contacts. If school is unable to make contact, the inclusion team may conduct a home visit. Where there are safeguarding concerns, school will always conduct a home visit and contact children's social care. Where parent/ guardian has made contact with school each day of absence, a home visit may be conducted on the 3rd day. Voluntary Support Offered 100%-96% Helping parents to access services of their own accord and/or a voluntary whole family plan to tackle any barriers to attendance.
95.9% - 95.0%	First day phone call regarding attendance from admin team if child is absent, if parent has not already notified the school. If call to school has been made, inclusion/ admin team may call for more information. If unable to contact parent, school will try other emergency contacts. If school is unable to make contact, the inclusion team may conduct a home visit. Where there are safeguarding concerns, school will always conduct a home visit and contact children's social care. Where parent/ guardian has made contact with school each day of absence, a home visit may be conducted on the 3rd day. Parents must provide medical evidence for all absences Voluntary Support Offered 95.9%-95.0% Helping parents to access services of their own accord and/or a voluntary whole family plan to tackle any barriers to attendance. More frequent calls from inclusion teams and face to face/ virtual meetings to provide more tailored support or signpost services if needed/ requested

94.9% - 90.0%	First day phone call regarding attendance from admin team if child is absent and a home visit may be conducted by the inclusion team. Daily home visits are conducted thereafter if absence is unexplained/ unauthorised. If the child is not present at their home during the time of the visit, the visitor leaves a 'we have called' note requesting for parent to contact school urgently. If children are known to children's services, the absence is shared with the relevant services. Where there are safeguarding concerns, school will always conduct a home visit and contact children's social care. Where there is a pattern of decline or regular non-attendance, a phone call meeting is arranged with inclusion team to offer early intervention support to improve attendance. For each absence below 95%, parents receive a colour-coded attendance letter indicating child's current attendance and attendance support and signpost information to support attendance improvements. Early Support/ Intervention Offered 94.9%-90% Parents must provide medical evidence for all absences Referral to inclusion team meeting, discussing appropriate additional/ further support and early intervention. Follow up phone call meeting with inclusion team regarding decision/ early support. At 92%, parent will be invited into school for a pre-referral meeting.
Below 90%	First day phone call regarding attendance from admin team if child is absent and a home visit conducted by the inclusion team.
	Daily home visits are conducted daily thereafter, even if absence is explained/ authorised. Targeted Support 90%- Below Follow up from 92% pre-referral meeting- review meeting with inclusion team following support/ early intervention previously agreed/ offered. Targeted intervention in attendance with Leadership team present. A formal parenting agreed contract agreed by the pupil, parent, school and/or local authority Statutory action if thresholds are met

Leaving the school site during the school day	• Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school. • Parents/carers should arrange medical, dental and other appointments outside of school time unless it is an emergency. Parents/carers are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time. • Pupils must be signed out at Reception on leaving the school and signed back in on their return. • When a pupil is being collected from school, parents/carers are requested to report to Reception before the pupil is allowed to leave the site. • If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents/carers will be contacted. Should the school be unable to contact the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupil as a missing person or contact Social Services.

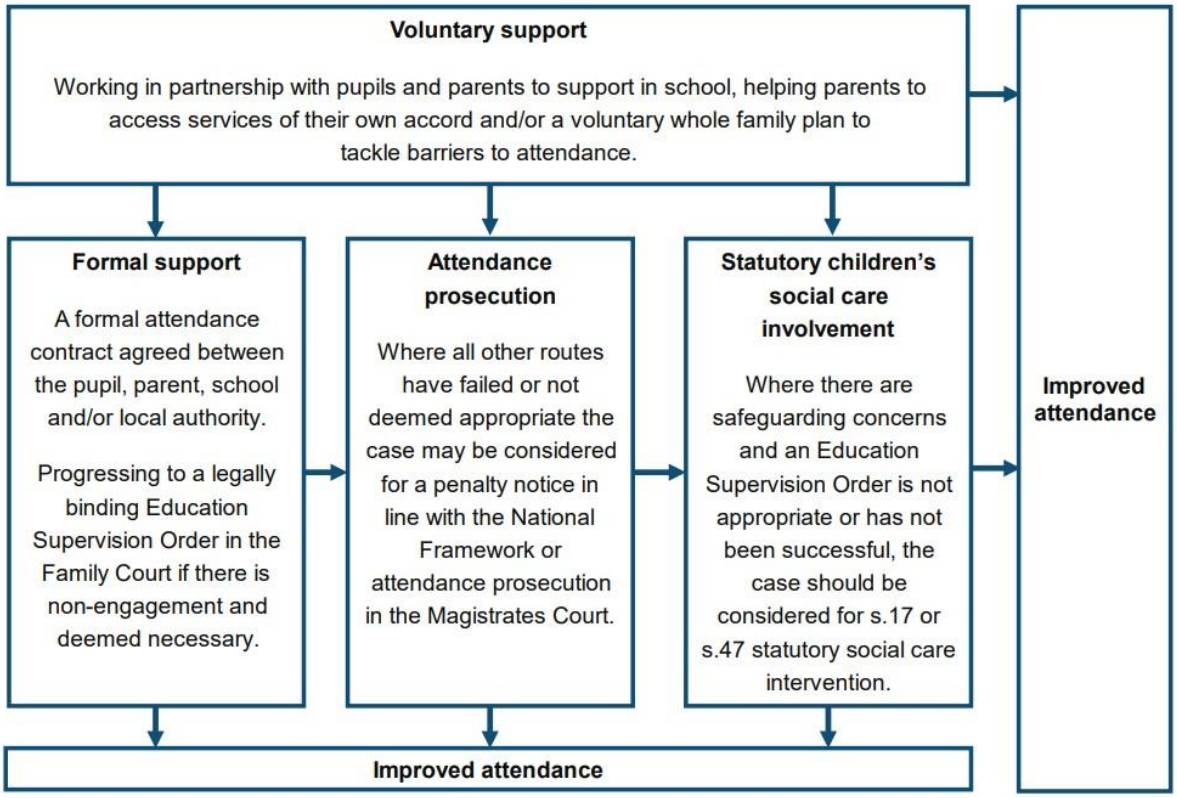
Changing Schools	It is important that if parents/carers decide to send their child to a different school that they inform Thomas Hall School in writing as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from our school roll until the following information has been received and investigated: • The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next; • The address of the new school; and • A new home address if appropriate is supplied. The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. If the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and after four weeks the pupil will be registered on the S2S website as a Pupil Missing Education.
Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) LA Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices	The school refers cases that meet the local authority FPN Code of Conduct in relation to unauthorised absence. **Devon LA - School absence penalty notices: Code of conduct – Education and Families (devon.gov.uk)**
Part-Time Timetables	• Local authorities and the Trust have published guidance for all schools, on the use of part-time timetables for pupils of compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June of Year 11) • All schools are required to return information on children who are on part-time tables every term.
Elective Home Education	All children have the right of fair access to a suitable and effective full-time education, however there is no legal requirement for this to take place in a school setting. Families are permitted to provide an education for their children at home if they choose to do so, rather than sending them to school full-time (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996). This is referred to as Elective Home Education (EHE). The school will not actively encourage parents to Electively Home Educate.
	If the school receives information that a parent is considering Elective Home Education, then they must inform the Local Authority and arrange a meeting with the parent, school and Local Authority representative to ensure the parent is fully informed. If a parent submits written application to remove a pupil from the school roll the school must notify the Local Authority at the point at which the regulation for removal has been met. The Local Authority will then follow their policies and procedures in relation to Elective Home Education. Where a pupil has an EHCP then the pupil can only be removed from roll with the Local Authority authorisation and therefore an emergency annual review should be called by the school to address placement.
Monitoring	We believe that this policy will be effective only if it is consistently monitored across the whole school whereby attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Appendix B

Other formal and legal Attendance interventions that may be considered:

As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, schools, trusts and local authorities should always work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.

Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

Attendance Contracts –

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school (with the exception of independent schools and non-maintained special schools) or local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. An attendance contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.

Education Supervision Orders –

Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal attendance contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be a useful alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. In deciding whether to progress to an ESO, the school and local authority should have exhausted voluntary support and be clear that making the order would be beneficial for the pupil and parent. Where safeguarding concerns exist, the lead practitioner should also discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and children's social care services and agree an ESO would be a more suitable option than a s.17 (Children in Need) or s.47 (Child Protection) plan. In all cases, local authorities must fully consider using an ESO before moving forward to prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, rather than Magistrates Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's

duties to secure the child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO.

Attendance Prosecution –

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case.

Where it is decided to pursue prosecution, only local authorities can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs, including in the preparation of court documentation. Local authorities have the power to prosecute:

- Parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order issued by the local authority to require a parent to get their child registered at a named school (under section 443 of the Education Act 1996). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).

- Parents who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at a school, for which there are 2 separate offences: section 444(1) where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly and fails to ensure the child does so. The section 444(1) offence may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000) and the section 444(1A) offence my result in a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.

- Parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the local authority or governing body has arranged alternative provision (under sections 444 and 444ZA). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000), or if the parent is found to have known the child was not attending regularly and failed to ensure that they did so, a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months. • Parents who persistently fail to comply with directions under an Education Supervision Order (under Schedule 3 to the Children Act 1989) or breach a Parenting Order or directions under the order (under section 375 of the Sentencing Act 2020). These may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).

Parenting Order –

Parenting orders are an ancillary order that can be imposed by the Court following conviction for nonattendance alongside a fine and/or community order. Parents' agreement is not required before an order is made. They may be appropriate where the parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance and where compulsion to do so would help change parental behaviour.

The order requires a parent to comply with the arrangements specified in the order by the Court which can include a requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions (e.g. parenting education or parenting support classes) where they will receive help and support to enable them to improve their child's attendance for up to 3 months. All parenting orders must specify a 'responsible officer' which will be named on the order. This should be the most appropriate lead practitioner working with the family.

Appendix C

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

Present
Approved Education Activity (Present)
Unauthorised absence
Authorised absence

Not counted in possible attendances

Code	When to be used
Attending the school	
**/ **	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed. The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes. If a pupil is marked N but arrives later in the session after the register has closed, the attendance register must be amended to mark them as absent using code U or another absence code that is more appropriate.
Attending a place other than the school	
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site). A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead. Schools must also record the nature of the provision (regulation 10(5)), examples are: • attending courses at college; • attending unregistered alternative provision such as, home tutoring. Schools should ensure that the arrangements are in place whereby the provider notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.
V	Attending an educational visit or trip. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff. The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded. If the pupil does not attend the visit or trip the school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.
P	Participating in a sporting activity. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. A pupil can only be recorded as attending a place for an approved educational activity if: • the place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014; • the activity is of an educational nature; • the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and • the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. If schools have concerns about the appropriateness of an activity, they can seek advice from the sports' national governing body. The final decision on approving the activity, however, rests with the school and they should take the effect on the pupil's general education into account. Schools have responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. The school will need to be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the sporting activity notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.
W	Attending work experience. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the school as part of the pupil's education. The work experience must take place during the session for which it is recorded.

	A pupil can only be recorded as attending a place for an approved educational activity if: • the place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014; • the activity is of an educational nature; • the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and • the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. Schools have responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. The school will need to be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the work experience notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.
B	Attending any other approved educational activity. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience. The educational activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. A pupil can only be recorded as attending a place for an approved educational activity if: • the place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014; • the activity is of an educational nature; • the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and • the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. Schools must also record the nature of the approved educational activity (regulation 10(5)), examples are: • attending taster days at other schools; • attending courses at college; • attending unregistered alternative provision arranged by the school. Schools have responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. The school will need to be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the educational activity notifies the school of any absences by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code. As set out in the DfE's guidance on 'Providing remote education'. pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register.
D	Dual registered at another school. The law allows a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code. Code D may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absences are promptly followed up.
Absent – Leave of Absence Coding	
Code	When to use
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can only do so in the following circumstances (under regulation 11(2)): • Where the local authority have granted a licence for the pupil to take part in a performance regulated by section 37(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963. • Where a pupil does not need a licence for such a performance because an exception applies under section 37(3) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, including where a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) covering the pupil has been issued by the local authority in whose area the performance will take place or the Secretary of State. • Where a Justice of the Peace has given the pupil a licence to go abroad for a performance or other regulated purpose under section 25(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933. Schools should be sympathetic to requests for leave of absence that are supported by a licence issued by a local authority or a BOPA; as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a pupil's education. Where a local authority licence specifies the dates that a pupil is to be away from school to perform, the school should record the absence for those days as if a leave of absence had been applied for and granted. Where the terms of the local authority licence do not specify dates, however, or where a BOPA or other exemption or

	licence from a Justice of the Peace applies, it is at the discretion of the school to grant leave of absence. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record a pupil who is absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or work abroad under a licence or exemption as described above.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment. Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, they should get the school's agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can only grant leave of absence for this under regulation 11(11), where an application is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they 82 will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence), and the school is satisfied that, based on the individual facts of the case, there are exceptional circumstances which justify the leave. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record a leave of absence has been granted for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment. If a pupil is present at registration but then leaves the school to attend a medical or dental appointment during the session in question, no absence needs be recorded for that session.
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant leave of absence, under regulation 11(4), where an application has been made in advance by the parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence) and the leave is to enable the pupil to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record a leave of absence has been granted for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational establishment. This interview must take place during the session for which it is recorded.
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant leave of absence, under regulation 11(5), for a pupil to study for a public examination and the leave has been agreed in advance with a parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence). Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete and should be used sparingly. If schools do decide to grant study leave, provision must still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record when a pupil is absent with leave that has been granted for the purpose of studying for a public examination.
X	**Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school.** Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant a leave of absence, under regulation 11(7) or (8) for a pupil not of compulsory school age to attend school part-time. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record when a pupil is absent with leave because their timetable does not require them to attend. Where the pupil is absent when timetabled to attend the school, the absence must be recorded using the appropriate absence code not code X. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance. Under compulsory school age. In cases where a parent wishes their child to begin school on a part-time basis in line with the school admissions code, schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority may give leave of absence for sessions the pupil is not expected to attend. This must be agreed between the school and the parent they normally live with and must end at the point at which the pupil reaches compulsory school age. The times and dates when the pupil is expected to attend the school must be agreed by the school and the parent with whom the pupil normally lives with. **Over compulsory school age** Where a sixth form pupil's timetable does not require them to be on site for every session of the week, a school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority may give leave of absence The times and dates when the pupil is expected to attend the school must be agreed with the parent with whom the pupil normally lives with or the pupil.

C2	**Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.** All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary parttime timetable to meet their individual needs in line with paragraphs 67 – 70. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant a leave of absence, under regulation 11(6) to temporarily reduce the timetable of a pupil of compulsory school age to part-time, if the school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part-

	time and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will, during the period of temporary part-time education, be expected to attend the school. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record when a pupil is absent with leave because they are subject to a part-time timetable in line with an agreement between the school and a parent the pupil normally lives with that the pupil should temporarily be educated part-time. Where a pupil is receiving a full-time education, but only part-time at the school in question (e.g. dual registration, part-time unregistered alternative provision or flexischooling) this code must not be used and the appropriate code for why the pupil is not in school for that session should be used.
C	**Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance.** All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence should not, and from school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority, must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can only grant such a leave of absence under regulation 11(11), where an application is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence). Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record where a pupil is absent with leave for a reason that is not covered by another leave of absence code. **Pregnant pupils** Leave for maternity is treated like any other leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Schools are expected to act reasonably and grant a sufficient period of leave from school, taking into consideration the specific facts and circumstances of each case. Ultimately, it is at the school's discretion how much leave to grant.
T	**Parent travelling for occupational purposes.** The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. Schools should not unnecessarily ask for proof that the parent is travelling for occupational purposes, this should only happen when there are genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason for absence given. If there is doubt over the reason given, the school may ask for proof that the family are required to travel for occupational purposes during the period of absence. To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school. Whilst for statistical purposes this is counted as authorised absence, if a pupil's attendance was to fall below an acceptable level consideration may be given to attendance enforcement. **Defence in the law** Parents can in some circumstances, present a defence against prosecution, under section 444(6) of the Education Act 1996. This defence applies where the child has no fixed abode, and the parent can prove that they are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place and that the child has been attending school as regularly as the trade or business permits. If the child is aged 6 or older, the parent must also prove that the child has attended school for at least 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months. This is in addition to the requirement to prove that the child has attended as regularly as the trade or business permits, which means that if the trade or business permits the child to attend for more than 200, they should do so.

R	**Religious observance.** The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves). As a general rule, 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' is a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to mark the occasion. If in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion as set out under Code C. Schools and local authorities may seek to minimise the adverse effects of religious observance on a pupil's attendance and attainment by considering approaches such as: • Setting term dates around days for religious observance; • Working with local faith groups to develop guidance on absence for religious observance; • Taking INSET days that coincide with religious observance days; and • Providing individual support for pupils who miss sessions on days exclusively set apart for religious observance.
I	**Illness (not medical or dental appointment).** The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools are not expected to routinely request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness absences. Schools should only request reasonable medical evidence in cases where they need clarification to accurately record absence in the attendance register – i.e. making a decision that code I is the absence code that accurately describes the reason the pupil is not in school for the session in question. In the majority of cases a parent's notification that their child is too ill to attend school will be that evidence and can be accepted without question or concern. Only where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence. Where medical evidence is deemed necessary, school should not be rigid about the form of evidence requested and should speak to the family about what evidence is available. Schools should be mindful that requesting additional medical evidence unnecessarily places pressure on health professionals, their staff and their appointment system, particularly if the illness is one that does not require treatment by a health professional. Where a parent cannot provide evidence in the form requested but can provide other evidence, schools should take this into account. Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence the school should have a conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may in itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.
E	**Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made.** The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education. When a pupil of compulsory school age is suspended or permanently excluded on disciplinary grounds from a maintained school, pupil referral unit, academy, city technology college, or city college for the technology of the arts, alternative provision must be arranged from the sixth consecutive school day of any suspension or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made for the session in question and the pupil is attending it, schools should record this using the appropriate attendance code in regulation 10(3) Table 2 or if the pupil is attending another school at which they are a registered pupil, schools should record this using code D (dual registered at another school).
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements. The pupil is unable to attend the school because a local authority has a duty set out in regulation 10(12) or (13) to make access arrangements to enable the pupil's attendance at school and have failed to do so.
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available. The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available. Walking distance in relation to a child under the age of 8, means 2 miles, and for a child of 8 or above, means 3 miles. In each case measured by the nearest available route.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel. The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency.
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.

Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed. This code may not be used for any planned closure such as weekends or holidays.
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention. The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are: • in police detention, • remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • detained under a sentence of detention. If a pupil is remanded to local authority accommodation, they should attend school as normal where possible and where it is not possible any absence should be recorded using the appropriate code. A pupil's absence should be recorded under code Y7 (Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause) if they are unable to attend because they are serving a community based (i.e. non-detained) part of a sentence of detention, referral order, or youth rehabilitation order that requires them to be absent during the school day. Schools are expected to communicate with the pupil's Youth Offending Team worker while the pupil is in custody and remains on the school roll to discuss the pupil's educational needs,
	progress and return to the school upon their release where appropriate. Education is a key part of effective resettlement, therefore it is important that schools maintain contact with the Youth Offending Team throughout the sentence to support the child's resettlement where appropriate.
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law. The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be: • contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), or • prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school. This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not, in itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause (regulation 10(6)).
Absent – Unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school. The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.
N	Reason for absence not yet established. Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has not yet been established before the register closes, the absence must be recorded with code N. Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session (regulation 10(7) to (9)). Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O.
O	**Absent in other or unknown circumstances.** Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.
U	**Arrived in school after registration closed.** Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session. 400. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes.
Administrative Codes	

Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register. To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Most school admissions involve the school or admission authority offering a place to the parent of the prospective pupil (or, in the case of admission to sixth form, the prospective pupil). An offer of a place is not an agreement. Before a pupil can be registered at a school the parent (or prospective pupil) must have accepted the offer, either by agreeing the starting day in advance or by the fact of the pupil attending the school on that day. In the normal admissions round, when parents have accepted the school place and starting day offered, the local authority can communicate that agreement to schools on behalf of the parent. This can also be the case where the local authority coordinate in-year applications for school places. Schools must enter pupils' names on the admission register on the first day that the school and a person with control of the pupil's attendance have agreed that the pupil will attend the school. If no date has been agreed or notified, the pupil's name must be entered on the first day they attend the school. Names must be added before the beginning of the first session on that day. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed starting day, the school must follow this up and try to establish the reason for absence.
#	**Planned whole school closure.** Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance such as: • days between terms; • half terms; • occasional days (for example, bank holidays); • weekends (where it is required by the management information system); • up to 5 non-educational days; and • use of the whole school as a polling station.

Appendix D

Absences will be authorised if:

- The pupil is absent with leave as agreed by the Headteacher.
- The pupil is ill and has not been asked to provide proof of absence.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision.
- There is a close family bereavement.
- Leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence).
- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Headteacher.

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or when no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

Appendix E

Annex A: Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register

Grounds for deleting a pupil of compulsory school age from the school admission register set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended	
1	8(1)(a) - where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
2	8(1)(b) - except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he has been registered as a pupil at another school.
3	8(1)(c) - where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within subparagraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion.
4	8(1)(d) - in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.
5	8(1)(e) - except in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered.
6	8(1)(f) - in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that — (i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
7	8(1)(g) - that he is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
8	8(1)(h) - that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and — (i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2); (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.

9	8(1)(i) - that he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.
10	8(1)(j) - that the pupil has died.
11	8(1)(k) - that the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and— (i) the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school; or (ii) the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form.
12	8(1)(l) - in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school.
13	8(1)(m) - that he has been permanently excluded from the school.
14	8(1)(n) - where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.
15	8(1)(o) where— (i) the pupil is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy; (ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the pupil; and
	(iii) those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.

Appendix F

Further sources of information:

Relevant legislation

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (legislation.gov.uk)

The Education Act 2002

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

Equality Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk)

Other DfE guidance

Parental responsibility measures for school attendance and behaviour

Children missing education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Keeping children safe in education 2025

Working together to improve school attendance applies from 19 August 2024 .pdf