East Midlands Academy Trust



East Midlands Academy Trust

Attendance Policy

'Every child deserves to be the best they can be'

Inclusion Innovation Impact

Scope: East Midlands Academy Trust & Academies within the Trust	
Version: 5	**Filename:** EMAT Attendance Policy
Approval: October 2026 Approved by Trust Board	**Next Review: October 2027** This Policy will be reviewed by the owner and & approved by the Trust Board annually
Owner: Trust CEO	
Policy type:	
Statutory	Replaces Academy's current policy

Revision History

Revision Date	Revisor	Description of Revision
October 2026 v5	Head of Governance & Compliance & Attendance Officer	Updated in collaboration with School Attendance Support Service to ensure full alignment with DFE guidance and requirement for legal intervention. Review date amended to align with Trust Board meeting schedule. Owner updated to Trust CEO.
June 2026 v4.1	AR	Updated Application for Leave of Absence Form
March 2026 v4	JL	Updated to give greater consistency across EMAT schools: more detail on approaches schools will take to work with parents/carers to improve attendance, issuing of Penalty Notices, including national threshold and 1st, 2nd and 3rd offences; template letters. More detail on how pupils with SEND are supported. Addition of how good attendance is promoted. New section - Engagement with families. Clarification of process for addressing low/declining attendance. Updated template letters
September 2025 v3	TT	Updated to reflect changes and additions to local and national guidance. Minor changes. Reflecting update to KCSIE 2025.
April 2025 v2.1	ZM / TT	Home visits to be made earlier should it be considered appropriate Consistent message of 96% as the academy attendance target.
September 2024 v2	AR / TT	DFE updates to FPN fine and irregular attendance scope. Updated attendance codes. Reference to parental contract changed to attendance contract. Reference to KCSIE 2024.
May 2024 v1.2	AR	Addition of criteria that must be met before WNC School Attendance Support Team can proceed with any referral.

March 2024 v1.1	JL	Addition of reference to text message and email communication, incl Appendix F Tidied pupil absence safeguarding procedure diagram
February 2024 v1	TT	• New Policy

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1. AIMS AND PURPOSE

This policy sets out the mechanisms and processes for promoting good attendance within EMAT schools and settings. Fundamentally, we believe strong partnerships with parents, carers and pupils is the key ingredient. Regular school attendance is essential if pupils are to achieve their full potential. Northampton International Academy believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident and competent young people who can realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. If pupils do not attend school regularly, they will not be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Research shows undisputable links between pupil outcomes, qualifications and future success. Every young person is entitled to an education and absence from school means lost learning and sometimes can also be a warning sign for a range of safeguarding issues.

Attendance is an essential foundation for positive outcomes for all pupils and the responsibility of everyone.

We expect all our pupil's attendance to be 96% or above and we are committed to working proactively to help and support parents/carers and pupils to achieve this. Most pupils attend well and we will work with families to identify the reasons if attendance is low and try to resolve any difficulties. We regard attendance lower than 96% as unsatisfactory.

If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of 10 weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action.

This could include:

- a Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine
- prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000
- prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment

2. LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance and School attendance parental responsibility measures. and local guidance from the West Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2026 framework toolkit

This Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation. It is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement and links closely to other school policies and procedures.

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Our commitment is to ensure every child achieves and becomes the best they can be. This means we seek to work with parents/carers to ensure that their children attend school and receive the full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they reach the age of 16. Under the Education Act 1996, the local authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents/carers secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present
- absent
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

4. PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

The school recognises that good attendance is not only the responsibility of the individual pupil but the entire school community. We actively promote the benefits of good attendance through the following methods:

- Whole school approach: attendance is celebrated at every level of the school, from assemblies to classrooms, where positive role models are recognised.
- Rewards and incentives: pupils with 100% attendance for each term will be awarded certificates, and those with significant improvements in their attendance will be acknowledged in school-wide assemblies and communications.
- Parental engagement: we aim to foster strong partnerships with parents/carers by regularly sharing attendance data, providing clear expectations for attendance and offering guidance on how to support their child's school attendance.

4.1 Engagement with families and overcoming barriers to attendance

The school is committed to working closely with families to understand and remove barriers to regular attendance. We aim to build positive, respectful relationships with parents and carers, ensuring that any concerns regarding attendance are addressed early and sensitively.

If patterns of absence emerge, the school will:

- Work collaboratively with families to identify the root causes of absences, offering support through additional interventions, if necessary.
- Provide clear communication about the importance of regular school attendance and the potential long-term effects of absence on a child's learning and development.
- Where appropriate, make referrals to external agencies that can provide additional support for the family or pupil, ensuring the whole family is supported.

4.2 Support for vulnerable pupils including pupils with SEND

The school acknowledges that some pupils face additional challenges in attending school regularly. These include pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), health issues, those who are Looked After, are subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or Children in Need (CIN) or have a Social Worker.

For these pupils, we will:

- Provide relevant tailored support through early intervention strategies, which may include additional pastoral support, flexible timetabling, and access to mental health services where needed.
- Monitor attendance closely, using data to identify patterns and offer support as soon as attendance becomes a concern.
- Collaborate with external agencies, including local authorities, to ensure pupils have access to the services they require, including mental health support, counselling, or alternative educational provision if necessary.

We prioritise pupils who are identified as vulnerable. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the pupil's home, a home visit by staff or if relevant, a call to the local authority duty line and/or any other relevant agencies in order that a same-day visit can be made. If no improvement is made in attendance after the initial follow-up, we will collaborate with **external agencies**, such as **social services**, to assess the child's well-being and provide additional resources for support

4.3 Support Systems

We recognise that poor attendance or punctuality can be an indication of other issues in a pupil's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents/carers should make the school aware of any difficulties or changes that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation or incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required and draw upon a range of strategies to support improved attendance (see Appendix C). These include:

- Discussion with parents/carers and pupils
- Convening attendance panels
- Attendance contracts

- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies (Early Help)
- Additional learning support
- Pupil voice activities
- Friendship groups
- PSHE support
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Time limited, part-time timetables (exceptional circumstances)
- Reintegration support

All support offered to families is pupil-centred and planned in collaboration and agreement with parents/carers and pupils. Where parents/carers decline to engage with support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the school will consider the use of legal sanctions.

5. WHY ATTENDANCE MATTERS

We monitor all pupils' attendance closely and report pupils' attendance and absence levels to parents and carers on a regular basis, including regular updates by text or email. This includes the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning:

Percentage Attendance	Number of days absence	Lost learning time	What happens?
Pupils with attendance 100%	0	0	Maximised chance of success. School implements rewards.
Pupils with attendance 99 – 96%	2 to 8 days	13 to 52 hours	Satisfactory level of attendance, taking account of genuine illness or other authorised circumstances. School implements rewards for *termly* 100% attendance
Pupils with attendance 95 – 91%	9 to 18 days	59 to 117 hours	Unsatisfactory attendance. Early targeted intervention put in place. Parents'/carers informed of low or declining attendance and next steps of *Partnership Process to Improve Attendance* (see section 13 below).
Pupils with attendance below 90%: persistent absence	More than 19 days across the year	More than 124 hours	*Partnership Process to Improve Attendance*. (see section 13 below).
Pupils with attendance below 80%: very concerning absence	More than 38 days across the year	More than 247 hours	*Partnership Process to Improve Attendance* (see section 13 below).
Pupils with attendance below 50%: severe absence	More than 95 days across the year	More than 618 hours	*Partnership Process to Improve Attendance* (see section 13 below).

6. REPORTING AN ABSENCE

Parents/carers must advise the school by telephone on 01604 212811 on each day of each absence **by 8am,** providing the reason for the child's absence and expected date of return.

7. REQUESTING LEAVE IN TERM TIME

Parents/carers may request an authorised absence during term time, but only in the event of **exceptional circumstances** (see Section 8). Parents/carers must provide **in advance**, **a written request to the Headteacher** using the ***Term Time Absence Request Form*** (See Appendix A).

- Only **exceptional circumstances** warrant an authorised leave of absence. We consider each request individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant context of each request.
- Holiday requests are not authorised.
- All requests for term time absence will be responded to in writing, outlining whether the request for absence has been granted.
- Retrospective requests for a term time absences will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.
- If permission for a term-time absence is not granted and the parent/carer takes their child out of school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. In such cases, the school may refer the absence to the local authority who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.
- If a pupil fails to return to school within any agreed authorised absence and contact with the parents/carers has not been made or received, the school may remove the pupil from the school's roll in compliance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. This means that the child will lose their school place.

8. CATEGORISING AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Where a pupil of compulsory school age is recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences are treated as unauthorised unless a legitimate (see below) explanation for a pupil's absence has been received and confirmed.

The school will authorise a leave of absence only where there are exceptional circumstances. All requests for absence are judged individually, taking into consideration the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context for 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.

The Department for Education (DfE) provides guidelines on **authorised absence** and outlines specific **exceptional circumstances** under which schools can consider granting an absence. Exceptional circumstances include**:**

- **Illness:**
  Absence due to illness is authorised, but medical evidence (e.g. a doctor's note, appointment cards, or prescription details) if the illness lasts more than a few days or is recurrent is required.

- **Medical or dental Appointments**:
  Pupils may be allowed to leave school for medical or dental appointments. However, parents/carers are encouraged to make appointments outside of school hours. If that's not possible, the pupil should attend school for part of the day. Appointment cards or letters are required to authorise the absence.

- **Bereavement**:
  If there is a family bereavement, the school may authorise the absence. The length of time will depend on the individual circumstances (e.g., the death of a close family member). The school may request proof of the event.

- **Religious observance**:

  Absences for religious observances are authorised under specific conditions. If a pupil's religious observance falls on a school day, the school will consider the absence as authorised for the day observance in accordance with the Department for Education's guidelines as long as it is a recognised religious event. Parents/carers should submit a *Term-Time Absence Request Form* at least **5 school days in advance** for any absences related to religious observances.

  Authorisation of absence for religious observance will be considered for a **maximum of one day**, when the parent/carers' religious body has set the day apart for religious observance (not the parent/carer themselves). If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parents/carers applies for more than one day, the school will likely only authorise one day. Additional time could only be considered at the school's discretion under 'Exceptional circumstances'.

- **Exceptional family circumstances**:

  The school may authorise absence for exceptional family reasons, such as a **wedding** or a **significant family event** that cannot be rescheduled outside of term time. However, these types of absences will be considered **on a case-by-case basis**, and we will request evidence to justify the absence.

- **Severe weather or unavoidable travel Issues**:

  Adverse weather conditions or other unavoidable travel disruptions such as floods, snow, strikes, that prevent pupils from attending school can be considered legitimate reasons for absence. The school will make efforts to record these instances and will not automatically penalise students for circumstances beyond their control.

- **Public examinations and external educational visits**:

  Absences for public exams or external educational activities such as competitions, concerts, or study visits that have been pre-approved by the school may be authorised. The school will check that such activities are recorded and that they align with the overall curriculum or educational goals.

Absence will not be authorised unless parents/carers provide a satisfactory reason and explanation in advance, using the *Term Time Absence Request Form*, that has been accepted as such by the Headteacher.

9. CATEGORISING UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Examples of **unsatisfactory** reasons **that will not be authorised** include:

- Holidays during term time: In accordance with DfE guidance, we do not authorise holidays during term time unless there are very specific exceptional circumstances, such as a parent/carer being in the armed forces or the family needing to attend a funeral abroad
- Minor illnesses where the child is considered well enough to attend school. The school will request medical evidence if the absence is for frequent minor illnesses (e.g., colds, headaches) that impact a pupil's regular attendance
- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping or family errands e.g. shopping for uniform.
- Shopping for uniform or any other shopping activities
- Having a hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for training days or other purposes
- 'Couldn't get up'
- Looking after a family member.

Any days taken outside those agreed will be recorded as unauthorised. If a *Term Time Absence Request Form* is not submitted, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Where necessary, to support its decision, the school will liaise with, and seek advice from, relevant local religious bodies.

9.1 Absence and attendance codes

Attendance codes are assigned to each pupil's record, detailing whether any absences are authorised or unauthorised. These codes are used for government statistics and to support future decision-making on pupil support and interventions

National absence and attendance codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and comply with regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through our school census system. This data helps schools, trusts, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for absence.

Details of the attendance codes can be found in Appendix B and Government guidance (*Working together to improve school attendance)* regarding school attendance can be found by clicking the following link: Guidance on attendance codes (Chapter 8)

10.PUNCTUALITY AND LATE ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL

Good punctuality is essential to ensure pupils are ready to start each school day and learn. Lateness to school or poor punctuality negatively impacts pupils' learning.

- If a pupil is late by 5 minutes each day, over an academic year this is equivalent to three whole days of lost learning.
- 10 minutes lateness is equal to six and a half days, and
- 15 minutes, 10 days of lost learning.

10 days is 50 hours of lost learning, and this can seriously impact a pupil's achievement and ultimately, life chances. Good timekeeping is also a very important life skill. We expect parents/carers to ensure their children arrive on time. Poor punctuality not only disrupts your child's learning but the learning

of others. It is for these reasons we take punctuality very seriously. Lateness to school is not acceptable.

Pupils are expected to arrive on time however, **we encourage all pupils to arrive to school 15 minutes before school begins** so that they are in their classroom ready to learn.

Registration begins at the following times for our pupils:

- 8.30am for Key stage 3 and Key stage 4 – Year 7, 8 ,9 10 & 11

Registration is completed by a member of staff and pupils are given a code to show their attendance status (see Appendix B).

- **The register closes 30 minutes after school begins** for all pupils. All pupil absences codes are checked by the attendance officers by 9.30am and all pupils on site are accounted for by the Attendance team by 9.45am. If a pupil is absent and no reason has been provided, we will call the parent/carer. This begins at 9.45am by the Attendance team.
- Pupils who arrive before the registers have closed are marked as 'Late' on the registers (coded 'L').
- Pupils who arrive after the registers have closed will be recorded as 'U' which is a half-day **unauthorised** absence.
- Any pupil arriving late must immediately report to **the main reception (Primary or Secondary**) to ensure they are registered correctly and staff are aware the pupil has arrived.
- Statutory action, as outlined in section 15, may be taken where appropriate. Lateness will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation and evidence for the late arrival is provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.
- Due to the importance of punctuality, all pupils who arrive late to school will be issued with a detention (please see the behaviour and attitudes policy for more details).

11. INTERNAL TRUANCY

- All pupils are expected to attend lessons as set out on their individual timetables. If a pupil does not attend each lesson the teacher will mark the register with an absent mark (N).
- All teaching staff ensure that registers are recorded accurately and will change the absence (N) to a late mark (L) if a child arrives after the register is taken. A comment will be recorded as an attendance comment on Arbor as to why they are late.
- The Attendance Team monitor and track all 'N' marks to lessons. They will analyse patterns of attendance to see if a pupil has been absent since the start of the school day (this will be picked up by the first-day response team) or if they have been attending other lessons and are absent for just one lesson during the school day. This would indicate possible internal truancy.
- The Attendance Team will locate in the school site, any pupils who are absent to lessons but were registered at the start of the school day and liaise with heads of year, the mental health hub staff and other school teams.
- Truancy will be dealt with through the behaviour policy. Please see the behaviour policy for more details.

If a pupil cannot be located

In the event that an absent pupil cannot be located following the checks made by the Attendance Team, a member of the safeguarding team will be notified that the pupil is missing. The safeguarding team will liaise with the parent/carer by telephone to inform them that their child has not attended their class and cannot be located in the school. This telephone call is not to alarm the parent/carer, but to identify if there are any reasons for the absence, and to clarify the next steps to ensure the pupil's safety. Where necessary, the police and/or other agencies will be contacted to support in locating the pupil. When the missing pupil is located, a phone call will be made to notify the parent or carer by the same member of staff who made the original call, and clarify with the parent/carer, the next steps in response to the pupil's absence.

12. PERSISTENT AND SEVERE ABSENCE

12.1. Persistent Absence

A pupil has persistent absence (PA) if attendance falls below 90%. When a pupil misses 10% or more of school this is equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year. We will put additional targeted support in place for pupils who are persistently absent.

12.2. Severe Absence

A pupil has severe absence if attendance falls below 50%. Pupils who are absent from school more than they are present are identified as severely absent pupils. These pupils will very likely find it more difficult to be in school due to significant barriers to regular attendance and as such, we will provide more intensive, targeted support and an agreed joint approach with parents/carers, local authorities and where necessary, work with additional partners and agencies. All partners will work together, including specific support with attendance, including where relevant a whole family plan, or, for example, possible consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision, but only if this is most appropriate to a pupil's needs.

We will work with the local authority's School Attendance Support Team to identify, discuss, and agree joint targeted actions for pupils who are persistently or severely absent and those at risk of becoming so. This will include agreeing what support the local authority will provide and the involvement of any other relevant statutory or voluntary services.

Parents/carers should do everything possible to encourage all school-age children to attend. If there are any school based factors such as difficulty with work or relationships with peers, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve the problem.

Where emotional based school avoidance is a concern appropriate support and referrals to external agencies will be sought to support the pupil in receiving their education.

13. PARTNERSHIP PROCESS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

The school reviews attendance carefully and if a pupil's attendance is unsatisfactory and/or declining or a pupil is persistently absent, we will notify parents/carers in accordance with our *Partnership Process to Improve Attendance*. Any pupil whose attendance is below 96% is a concern and this is the process for how we will work with parents/carers to ensure good attendance:

No concern	
Attendance is between 100% and 96% or satisfactory & improving.	Ongoing monitoring and praise and rewards as appropriate.

Tier 1: concern - notification sent to parents and carers	
Attendance below 96% and/or declining:	• Attendance team reviews patterns of absence. • **Tier 1 letter** sent to parents/carers giving notice of **4-week monitoring and review period** for attendance to improve. • This may be less if the school has further concerns. • School may speak with pupil and parent/carer. • Attendance team plan support and interventions.

Tier 2: serious concern - request for parent meeting	
Attendance does not improve and declines further.	• **Tier 2 letter** sent requesting **parent meeting** with an attendance officer or senior member of staff to discuss what needs to be done in partnership to support improvement. • **4-week monitoring and review period** or less if school has additional concerns. • School monitors attendance weekly.

Tier 3: serious concern - formal parent contract meeting	
Attendance does not improve and declines further.	• **Tier 3 letter** requesting **formal attendance contract meeting** with an attendance officer or senior leader/possible school governor to discuss support needed. • Targets and actions for improvement agreed and set in partnership. • **6-week review period or less** if attendance does not improve.

Tier 4: serious concern - consideration of external referral	
Attendance does not improve and declines further.	• **Tier 4 letter** informs parents/carers of school's decision of **referral to local authority unless** there are significant exceptional circumstances. • Consideration of legal action. This could include: • a Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine • prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000 • prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment

In the large majority of cases of low or declining attendance, the working in partnership process resolves reasons and barriers for unsatisfactory attendance and improvement is seen. At each stage of the process above, we will inform parents/carers of the next steps (see Appendix D, letter templates).

14. ABSENCE PROCEDURES: SCHOOL ACTIONS

Reasons for absence must always be reported by parents/carers. If a pupil gives a reason for an unauthorised absence, the Attendance Team will contact the parent/carer to discuss the reason for the absence.

- If a pupil is marked absent when registration opens and this has not been reported by parents/carers by the expected time (see above), the Attendance Team will make a telephone call to the parent/carer on the same day to clarify the reasons for the absence and ensure the absence of a pupil is made known to the parent/carer (see Appendix E).
- If contact is not able to be made by phone, contact will be made by text message and followed up with a further phone call.
- If a pupil is deemed to be vulnerable and we have not had a response, we will make a home visit and inform the relevant agencies as appropriate (Police, Social Care etc). For vulnerable pupils, daily home visits will be made on the first day of absence and any subsequent days of absence.
- If a pupil is absent without reason for three or more consecutive days, the school will typically arrange a home visit to check the pupil's wellbeing and ensure their safety. However, for pupils where there are no safeguarding concerns, and at the discretion of the school leaders, an alternative method such as a virtual check-in via an online platform may be used. However, in the majority of cases, a home visit will be conducted on the third day of absence and any subsequent days of absence, until contact is made.
- For any pupil who is absent without explanation and contact is not able to be made, advice may be sought from the local authority in order that further investigations can be made. Police and/or other relevant external agencies may also be notified where the school has concerns.
- In the event of a pupil's absence where contact has been made with the parent/carer, a home visit will be made no later than the fifth day of absence and at regular intervals until no later than the 10th day of continuous absence. For any pupil, Police and/or other relevant external agencies may also be notified where the school has concerns.

Where there are any unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact parents/carers for more information. The school analyses patterns of attendance of all pupils carefully. Where there is a pattern of unauthorised absence, for example on particular days or children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, the school will contact parents/carers to discuss the reasons for this and school systems that could support the family and/or the pupil with their attendance. If we have concerns and attendance does not improve, we will follow the *Partnership Process to Improve Attendance.*

Child Missing in Education

A Child Missing in Education (CME) referral will be made by the Attendance Officer where the following criteria applies:

- A pupil has been absent from school for a period of 10 consecutive school days
- The absence was unauthorised

- The school has not been able to contact the parents/carers
- The family do not appear to be living at the home address.

The school will take disciplinary action against any pupils discovered to be truanting. Truancy includes a pupil absconding from lessons and/or absconding from school. In the event of truancy, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school systems that could support the family and child to reduce the risk of further absence and ensure the pupil's safety.

15. LEGAL INTERVENTION

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with, a referral will be made to the School Attendance Support Service for consideration of legal action, this could include:

- a Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine
- prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000
- prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment

See Chapter 6 of Working Together to Improve School Attendance for further information on legal intervention.

15.1 Fixed Penalty Notices

National threshold

The local authority will consider issuing penalty notice if a pupil accumulates 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not need to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10 school week period can span different terms or school years.

- First Offence

  The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be £80 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days. Increasing to £160 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

- Second Offence

  The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be £160 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

- Third Offence and any Further Offences (within 3 years)

  The third time an offence is committed within 3 years, a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. This may result in prosecution under s444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted may result in a fine of up to £1,000, or prosecution

under s444(1A) Education Acti 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and /or 3 months imprisonment.

The duty of instigating court procedures sits with West Northamptonshire Legal Services.

See the following government guidance for more information: School attendance and absence: Legal action to enforce school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

15.2 Attendance contracts

An attendance contract is a formal voluntary written agreement between a parent/carer and the school to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. The aim from the outset is for the parent/carer(s), the pupil where they are old enough, and the school to work in partnership. The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

It is important to note that while an attendance contract is voluntary, non-engagement with the contract and/or failure to carry out agreed targets identified, will be provided as evidence to the School Attendance Support Service.

15.3 Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where a 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. Where there are safeguarding concerns, children's social care services will be involved in the ESO.

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/carer(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's/carer's duties to secure their child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO.

Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given under the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence and the local authorities may prosecute under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, in the Magistrates Court for persistent non-compliance with the Order and parents/carers (upon conviction) will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000.

15.4 Prosecution

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.

It is important that parents/carers realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child's attendance at school. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent/carer fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child, the child is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

The school will provide the local authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court.

A parent/carer found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

15.5 Parenting Orders

Parenting orders are an ancillary order that can be imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance 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.

16. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The implementation of this policy is carried out by the Deputy Headteacher, Safeguarding and Attendance Manager and Attendance Officers. Changes will be recommended to Governors and ratified by the Full Local Advisory Board.

This policy is published on the school's website and is shared with parents/carers with any initial information when pupils join the school. Parents/carers are reminded of it at the beginning of each school year and when it is updated.

17. REMOVAL FROM THE SCHOOL REGISTER

In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, pupils can be removed from the school's register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The pupil has registered at another school.
- The pupil has not continued at the school following completion of nursery education
- The pupil is also registered at one or more other schools and the other schools have agreed the deletion.
- The pupil has a school attendance order which has been changed to name another school.
- The pupil had a school attendance order which has been revoked.
- The parent of a pupil has notified the school in writing that the pupil will be leaving the school to be educated otherwise that at school.
- The pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school.
- The pupil has not returned following a leave of absence.
- The pupil is detained under a sentence of detention.
- The pupil has died.
- The pupil will be over compulsory school age and will not continue into the sixth form.
- The pupil has been permanently excluded from the school.

18. MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Specific measures to monitor attendance must be embedded and regularly checked to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils through specific and tailored interventions. These include:

- Registering pupils accurately and efficiently – recording within the first 5 minutes of every lesson /session on Arbor (electronic platform). In the event this system is down, a paper register will be sent to the attendance office immediately
- Setting attendance targets for individual pupils and specific groups, in line with national and trust expectations.
- Monitoring the attendance of vulnerable groups in relation to local and national figures for all pupils.

- Using Pupil Premium funding to address persistent absence and severe absence of disadvantaged pupils and regularly monitoring the impact of such interventions.
- Ensuring a multi-agency approach is in place for all pupils with severe absence.
- Working collaboratively with the School Attendance Support Team.
- Regularly monitoring pupil attendance and punctuality, reporting overall absence, persistent absence rates and severe absence rates for all pupils to the Local Advisory Board and East Midlands Academy Trust (EMAT).
- Rigorously monitoring low attending pupils over time to ensure rigorous intervention strategies are provided and demonstrate positive impact.
- Reporting school attendance statistics to parents/carers, local authority and DfE as appropriate.

19. USING ATTENDANCE DATA

We regularly monitor and analyse weekly attendance and punctuality patterns and trends to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place including intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. We work collaboratively with parents/carers, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Attendance and punctuality data is used to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils, and to leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads). Pupils who need support are identified and staff efforts are focused on developing targeted actions for these individuals or groups.

Half-termly, termly, and full year data is analysed and monitored to identify patterns and trends of pupils and cohorts. This data is benchmarked (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.

The impact of specific strategies and approaches to address areas of poor attendance or punctuality are evaluated carefully and findings are used to inform future strategies.

20. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents/carers, pupils, and the wider school community.

20.1. East Midlands Academy Trust will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the trust's ethos and policies.
- Take an active role in promoting high attendance and support our schools to prioritise and improve attendance. We will work together with school leaders to establish positive, whole-school attendance cultures.
- Take account of DfE guidance and meet all statutory responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Work collaboratively with staff in schools, the local advisory boards, local authorities, and other local partners to support schools to maintain high levels of attendance for all pupils.
- Set high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents/carers.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Identify and monitor attendance patterns across our schools to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools.
- Regularly review attendance data at board meetings, including thorough examination of recent and historic trends at a school level as well as benchmarking to comparator schools within the trust, local authority area, region and nationwide.
- Regularly review the Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Ensure training on attendance is included in any trust wide induction packs.
- Ensure training on attendance is included in schools continued professional development offer for all staff.
- Provide opportunities to share effective practice and interventions on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Where appropriate, share staff and other resources between schools in the trust.

20.2. The Trust Board and Local Advisory Board will:

- Be responsible for reviewing attendance data at regular intervals and ensuring that strategies are in place to improve attendance across the school.
- Ensure the implementation of the attendance policy and for monitoring the effectiveness of interventions, with a focus on persistent absence and vulnerable groups.
- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Regularly review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Ensure that the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Agree school attendance targets and, where appropriate, link these to the performance management of senior leadership within the school.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the local authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader to lead on attendance.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and monitored to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

20.3. The school leadership team will:

- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers to ensure a partnership approach to high attendance is maintained.
- Recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
- Have an effective whole-school culture of high attendance which is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities.
- Have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school.
- Have a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Have a clear process for data analysis, evaluation and monitoring.
- Ensure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents/carers and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels.
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life, through displays, assemblies, praise and rewards.
- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families.
- Provide regular attendance reports to other relevant leaders and class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils.
- Conduct thorough analyses of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Benchmark attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitor through data, the impact of school wide attendance efforts including any specific strategies implemented and use this information to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the board or governing body.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Return school attendance data to the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Use the standard documents to support a move to legal proceedings should that be necessary.

20.4. The Attendance Officer will:

- Monitor registration on a daily basis.
- Receive calls and messages from parents/carers regarding pupil absence.
- Contact parents/carers regarding pupil absence.
- Identify absence trends or concerns and raise these with the appropriate members of staff.

- Discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers and liaise with relevant members of staff.
- Take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the school, including improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.
- Monitor absence and attendance regularly.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and liaise with the appropriate members of staff.
- Contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified and provide support to improve their child's attendance.
- Support pupils to improve their attendance.
- Work with outside agencies, including the local authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual pupils.
- Provide data to the Headteacher, senior leaders, including those for safeguarding, LAB Members and the trust on a regular basis.

20.5. The Child and Family Support Worker will:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Support the Attendance Officer and the Attendance Team with their roles and responsibilities.
- Build strong relationships with families.
- Provide support for pupils and families.
- Provide families with information and signposting to services in the local area.
- Liaise with a range of external services such as housing and Social Care.
- Arrange and attend regular meetings with families.
- Provide reports to the Headteacher, principal, senior leaders, LAB Members and the trust on a regular basis.

20.6. Teachers, Inclusion Support Practitioners and other staff will:

- Be pro-active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- Endorse a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Treat all pupils and parents/carers with dignity and model respectful relationships to build positive relationships between home and school to help promote good attendance.
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement.
- Ensure that they fully understand and are up to date with the school's Attendance Policy, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue.
- Understand the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances.
- Understand the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers.
- Understand the school/trusts' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.
- Understand the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.
- Ensure that they follow the correct systems for recording attendance and registers are recorded accurately.
- Communicate with parents/carers on a regular basis about attendance.
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed.

- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

20.7. Parents and carers will:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly.
- Ensure their child arrives punctually.
- Communicate effectively with the school to identify reasons for any absence and strategies to support improved attendance and punctuality.
- Support their child by working together with the school and any other agencies to address any barriers to attendance.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to become involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, and in exceptional circumstances, parents/carers will complete a *Term Time Request for Absence Form* prior to the absence.

Appendix A – Term Time Absence Request Form

Application for Leave of Absence

Working together to improve school attendance advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government 'does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance'.

Absence requests must be made at least 5 days in advance, otherwise we will be unable to consider your individual circumstances, and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Our aim is for every pupil's attendance to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence. If you require any support with ensuring your child's attendance, please contact one of the following members of staff

- **Monica Doyle** monica.doyle@nia.emat.uk
- **Eva Lay** eva.lay@nia.emat.uk
- **Molly Downing** molly.downing@nia.emat.uk
- **Sydney Humphries** Sydney.humphries@nia.emat.uk

As a parent/carer you are strongly urged to avoid taking children out of school during term time. If, however, it is unavoidable then you should fill in this form and return it to the school.

All requests will be considered separately including the timing of the absence being requested (e.g. time leading up to tests, the number of previous requests, whether the absence could reasonably have been served during the school holiday). If it is felt that it would be detrimental to your child's educational progress or coincides with statutory tests or exams, then leave would not normally be agreed

If permission has not been given by the Headteacher, then the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Any unauthorised absence will appear in both the school register and records. A referral will be made to the School Attendance Support Service for consideration of legal action

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (a school day is 2 sessions - morning and afternoon) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. Increasing to £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court.

- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

Application for Leave of Absence

Pupil's name:		Class/Tutor Group:	
Pupil's address:			
Date of first day of absence:		Date of return to school:	
No. of school days your child will be absent from school		Date form received by school:	

Please detail the **exceptional circumstance** for which you are requesting leave of absence.

I understand that if the absence request is not authorised and the pupil is absent, the Headteacher may make a referral to the Local Authority, which may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or court proceedings.

Name(s) of parent /carer (s) making application:

Parent/carer 1		Dr / Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms (delete as applicable)	
Date of Birth:			
Forename:		Surname:	
Address:			
Signed:		Dated:	
Parent/carer 2		Dr / Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms (delete as applicable)	
Date of Birth:			
Forename:		Surname:	
Address:			
Signed:		Dated	
Name of Parent accompanying child during absence			

Please submit this at least 5 school days' notice of the absence request. Retrospective applications will not be authorised.

For school to complete and copy retained: **AUTHORISED / UNAUTHORISED** (please circle)

Head of School Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date:

Date form returned to parent / Carer: _____

Inclusion Innovation Impact

Response to requests for authorisation

(to be forwarded to both parents)

Date

Dear XXX

Government guidelines prevent Headteachers from granting any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. A family holiday during term time does not fall into the category of "exceptional circumstances".

I understand you have requested a leave of absence between xxxxx and xxxxx which is within the school's term time. This request has been declined by the headteacher and will be coded as unauthorised.

I understand a leave of absence was taken between xxxxxx and xxxxxx, which is within the school's term time. This request was declined by the headteacher and will be coded as unauthorised.

If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of ten weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action. This could include:

- **A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine.**
- **Prosecution under section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.**
- **Prosecution under section 444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.**

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (a school day is 2 sessions - morning and afternoon) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. Increasing to £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court.

- **Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.**
- **Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.**

I realise that the vast majority of parents do not take family holidays in term time as they recognise the significant impact this can have on their child's education. We support the government's stance on trying to reduce the amount of school missed due to holidays and we hope that you will continue to support us by not planning a leave of absence during term time.

Appendix B – Attendance Codes

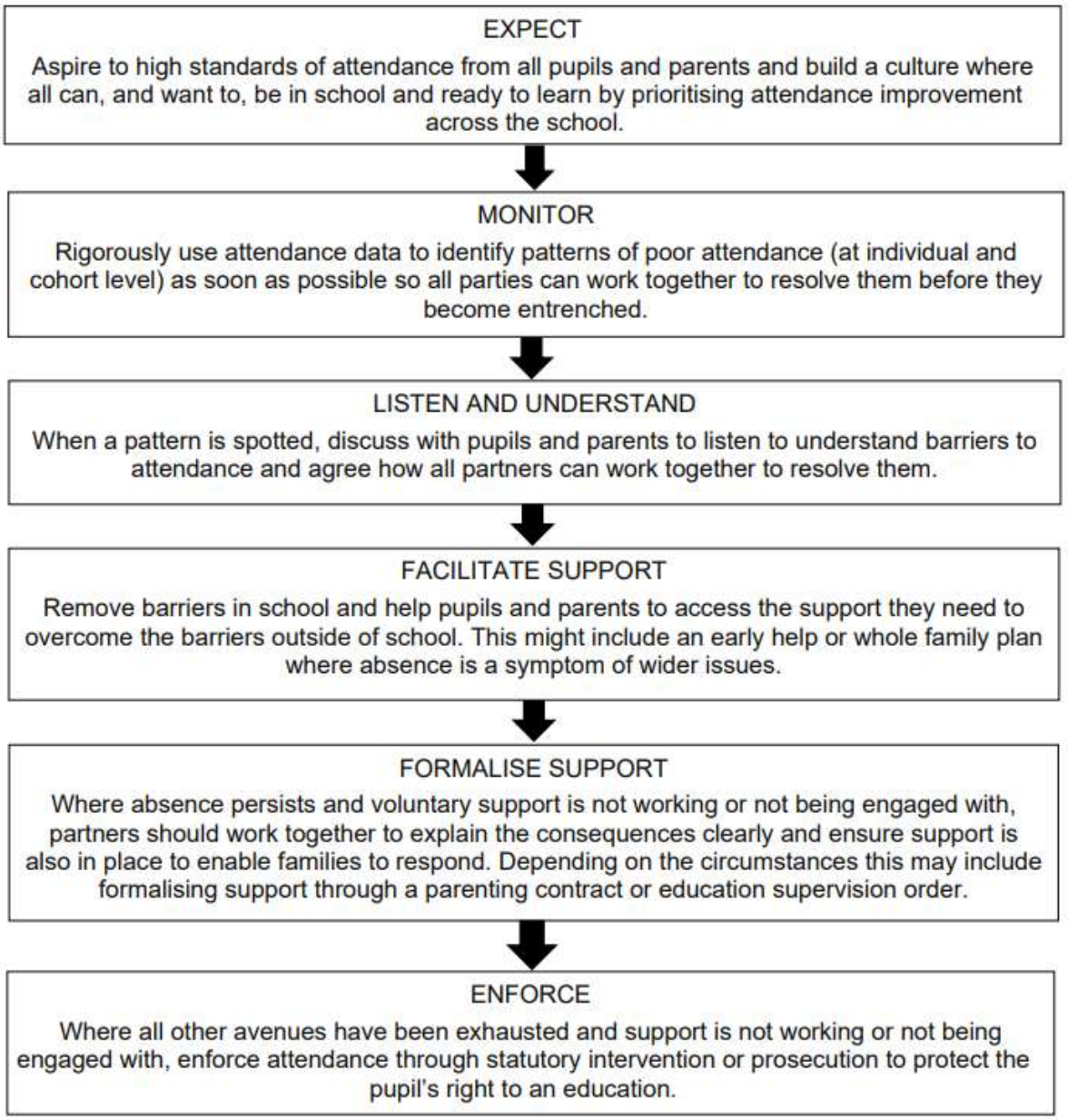
Table 1

CODE	MEANING	TYPE
/ \	Present at the school / morning \ afternoon	Present mark
B	Attending any other approved educational activity: - Alternative provision not arranged through the approved framework	Present mark
C	Authorised circumstance (see **Table 2: The C code** for breakdown).	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registered at another school.	Present mark
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made.	Authorised Absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school or term-time leave not granted by the school.	Unauthorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment).	Authorised Absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.	Authorised Absence
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority: - Home tutoring - Approved framework for alternative provision - Blended learning.	Present mark
L	Late arrival before the registers have closed.	Present mark
M	Attended a medical appointment.	Authorised Absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established.	Unauthorised Absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances.	Unauthorised Absence
P	Participating in a sporting activity.	Present mark
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements.	Not expected to attend
R	Religious observance.	Authorised Absence
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school.	Authorised Absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes, and the pupil has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months.	Authorised Absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed.	Unauthorised Absence
V	Attending an educational trip or visit.	Present mark
W	Attending work experience.	Present mark
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school.	Not expected to attend
Y	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause (see Table 2: The Y code for breakdown).	Not expected to attend
Z	Prospective or previous pupil not on admission register.	Not expected to attend

Table 2

CODE	MEANING	TYPE
The Y code: Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause, is broken down into the following subcodes to provide better differentiation of the reason:		
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.	Not expected to attend
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.	Not expected to attend
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. For example, this may be due to damage or teacher strikes.	Not expected to attend
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed. For example, extreme weather, damage, no hot water, or heating.	Not expected to attend
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention. For example, in police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.	Not expected to attend
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law. contrary to or prohibited by any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.	Not expected to attend
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. For example, an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent.	Not expected to attend
The C code: Authorised Absence is broken down into the following subcodes to provide better differentiation of the reason:		
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. 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.	Authorised Absence
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised Absence
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.	Authorised Absence

Appendix C – Working Together to Improve Attendance



Working together to improve school attendance (DfE)

Appendix D – Template letters sent to parents/carers

Attendance Tier 1 Letter – attendance below 96% and / or declining School logo

Date

Dear XXX

At [school/setting] we believe that working together is the key to ensuring all pupils can achieve their full potential. We regularly review attendance to ensure every pupil is getting the most from their education. Name's attendance has fallen below 96%, which is below the level we aim for at [School Name].

XX's attendance is now **XX%** which is unsatisfactory attendance. XX has missed **XX days** of school.

We are here to support [child's name], and we acknowledge that each family may face different challenges, and we are here to help you overcome any obstacles that may affect your child's attendance. Over the next four weeks, we will monitor your child's attendance and provide any necessary support to help this improve. Please ensure your child attends school every day so that they can achieve their very best. If there are any specific challenges you are facing, or if there is anything we can assist with, please do not hesitate to reach out to the attendance team at [email] or contact the school office.

Kind Regards

XX [Role]

Partnership process to improve attendance (see Attendance Policy for further information)	
No concern.	Attendance is between 100% and 96% or satisfactory and improving. Ongoing monitoring and praise and rewards as appropriate.
Tier 1: concern. Notification sent to parents/carers.	Attendance below 96% and/or declining. Attendance team reviews patterns of absence. **Tier 1 letter** sent to parents/carers giving notice of **4-week monitoring and review period** for attendance to improve (this may be less if the school has further concerns). School may speak with pupil and parent/carer. Attendance team plan support and interventions. If improving, praise/reward given.
Tier 2: serious concern. Request for parent meeting.	Attendance does not improve and declines further. **Tier 2 letter** sent requesting **parent meeting** with an attendance officer or senior member of staff to discuss what needs to be done in partnership to support improvement. **4-week monitoring and review period** or less if school has additional concerns. School monitors attendance weekly. If improving, praise/reward given.
Tier 3: serious concern. Formal parent contract meeting.	Attendance does not improve and declines further. **Tier 3 letter** requesting **formal Attendance Contract meeting** with an attendance officer or senior leader/possible school governor to discuss support needed. Targets and actions for improvement agreed and set in partnership. School monitors attendance weekly. **6-week review period or less** if attendance does not improve.
Tier 4: serious concern. Consideration of external referral.	Attendance does not improve and declines further. **Tier 4 letter** informs parents/carers of school's decision of **referral to local authority unless** there are significant exceptional circumstances. Consideration of legal action. This could include: • a Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine • prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000 • prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment

Attendance Tier 2 letter - request for parent meeting

Date

Dear XXX

I am writing to follow up regarding [child's name]'s attendance, which has unfortunately not improved since our last communication and we are concerned about the impact this may have on [his/her] learning and progress.

[Child's Name]'s attendance is now **XX%** which is unsatisfactory attendance. XX has missed **XX days** of school.

We believe that addressing this together will help [Child's Name] improve attendance. I would like to invite you to an Attendance meeting with [name/role] to discuss the situation and explore the best ways to move forward.

A date and time have been scheduled below but should you need a different date or time to accommodate your schedule, please let us know. We are committed to supporting you and [Child's Name] and want to ensure we're doing everything we can to help.

Appointment date and time_____

Review date_____

We look forward to working together to find a solution.

Yours sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Role]

Attendance Tier 3 letter: request for Parent Contract Meeting

Date

Dear XXX

I am writing to concerning the irregular attendance of [Child's Name]'s at (School) which as you are aware, is causing concern. I would like you and [Child's Name]'s to a **Attendance Contract Meeting** on (Day / Date / time) at (School). The aim of this meeting, which will be chaired by me, is to explore the reasons behind (Name) irregular school attendance and to offer support to help improve your child's attendance.

Whilst your involvement in any attendance Contract is voluntary, you should be aware that should (Childs Names)'s attendance remain irregular, a referral will be made to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action.

This may result in:
A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine.
Prosecution under section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
Prosecution under section 444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

I hope that you will work with us to improve your child's attendance and engage with the support offered. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on (school phone number) and I will be happy to discuss the matter.

Yours sincerely

[Your Name]
[Your Role]

Followed by after the meeting:

Date

Dear XXX

Thank you for attending the Attendance Contract (review) meeting on DATE. I have enclosed your copy of the Attendance Contract and need to make you aware of the next review meeting at (School) on Date/Day/Time.

During this time if [Child's Name]'s attendance continues to decline and there is no significant improvement, we will then refer the case to the School Attendance Support Services at Northamptonshire County Council for consideration of legal action.

This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine.
- Prosecution under section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under section 444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

I hope that you will work with us to improve your child's attendance and engage with the support offered. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on (phone number or email) and I will be happy to discuss the matter.

Yours sincerely

[Your Name]
[Your Role]

Attendance tier 4 – notification of referral to the Local Authority.

Date

Dear XX

Despite our previous meetings and support efforts, [Child's Name]'s attendance has unfortunately not improved.

(Child's Name)'s attendance is now **XX%** which is unsatisfactory attendance. XX has missed **XX days** of school.

At this point, as part of our attendance policy, we will be referring the case to the Local Authority for further support.

The Local Authority may consider issuing a **Fixed Penalty Notice** or may proceed with other legal options. We hope to work collaboratively with you and the Local Authority to support [Child's Name]'s attendance. However, this step is necessary to ensure that [Child's Name] can access their education and achieve their full potential.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact [attendance team email] or the school office.

Yours sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Role]

Attendance concern letter for pupils in Nursery or Reception years

Date

Dear XXX

At [school/setting] we believe that working together is the key to ensuring all pupils can achieve their full potential. Good attendance is vital for pupils' development in the Early Years and we regularly review attendance to ensure every pupil is getting the most from their education.

(Child's Name)'s attendance is currently **XX%** which is lower than we would expect. XX has missed **XX days** of school.

We are here to support [child's name], and we understand that each family's situation is unique. We want to work with you to address any concerns or barriers that may be affecting attendance. Over the next six weeks, we will monitor your child's attendance and provide any necessary support to help this improve.

If your child consistently fails to attend, the Local Authority may stop funding those unused hours. At that point, the nursery may consider withdrawing the place and offer it to another child on the waiting list.

Please ensure your child attends school every day so that they can achieve their very best. If there are any specific challenges you are facing, or if there is anything we can assist with, please do not hesitate to reach out to [name/role] or contact the school office.

Kind Regards

XX [Role]

Appendix E – First Response Procedure

Our first response procedure ensures all pupil absences are promptly followed up to safeguard pupils, identify barriers to attendance, and ensure no pupil misses out on education due to avoidable absence.

I. Morning Registration

Objective: take accurate attendance for all pupils.

Action: attendance registers are taken promptly at the start of each session. Pupils' attendance status is recorded as:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved off-site activity (if applicable)
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (e.g., severe weather conditions, medical emergencies).

System: attendance is recorded electronically using Arbor and all attendance codes are checked for accuracy.

II. First Day absence follow-up

Objective: Identify reasons for absence and ensure pupils are safe.

Action:

- By 9:00am, if a pupil is absent and no reason has been provided, a member of staff (attendance officer or designated staff member) will contact the parent/carer by phone to confirm the reason for absence and discuss expected return.
- If contact is not made by phone, a text message or email will be sent, requesting the parent to provide the reason for the absence.
- For Vulnerable Pupils:
  If the pupil is identified as vulnerable (e.g., SEND, looked after child, social care involvement), a home visit will be required on the same day if contact cannot be made through other means.

III. Afternoon registration (if applicable)

Objective: confirm the attendance of pupils during the afternoon session.

Action:

- Attendance should be taken again during the afternoon session.
- If a pupil is marked absent and no contact has been made by the morning, follow-up actions should continue as outlined above.

IV. Escalation Procedures:

If a pupil remains absent for **two consecutive days** and no contact has been made:

By Day 2:

- A **second contact attempt** (phone call, text, email) should be made to the parent/carer.

- If no response is received, a **home visit** should be planned to ensure the pupil is safe and the reason for absence is understood.

- **By Day 3:**
  - If no contact has been made by the third day, escalation to a **Safeguarding Lead** or **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** may occur to assess whether further safeguarding concerns exist. A home visit will take place.

V. Special considerations for Vulnerable Pupils:

For pupils with known vulnerabilities (e.g., SEND, looked after children, children with social workers):

- **Daily follow-up:** The school should prioritise **daily checks** and, where necessary, involve **external agencies** (e.g., social services, multi-agency support teams).
- **Home visits** should be conducted promptly, regardless of contact attempts, to ensure the child's welfare.
- All home visit details must be documented on the **school's safeguarding platform** (e.g., MyConcern/Arbor).

VI. Ongoing monitoring and support

- After the first day response:
  - If attendance does not improve after initial follow-up, a partnership plan should be established, involving parents, pupils, and external support services (as needed). This may include arranging a meeting to discuss strategies for improving attendance, with input from school staff, the attendance team, and other key personnel.
  - For persistent or severe absence, further interventions such as attendance contracts or referral to the local authority attendance support team should be considered.
- Weekly review:
  - All pupil absences should be reviewed weekly by the attendance team to identify trends and patterns.
  - Frequent absentees should be monitored, and action plans should be created to engage families and support the pupils in returning to school.

VII. Data recording and review

- Attendance data must be recorded accurately in the school's system and used for **weekly** and **termly reviews**.
- Schools should report on overall attendance, patterns of absence, and any support interventions during **Governance Meetings** or other **stakeholder meetings**.
- **Data review**: Schools should analyse patterns of absence by:
  - **Individual pupils**
  - **Cohorts** (e.g., year groups, SEND, FSM, vulnerable pupils)
  - Specific times or days of the week where absence may peak.

This data is shared with relevant stakeholders (e.g., school leadership, governors, local authorities) to inform decision-making.

No of days absence without contact	Pupils	Vulnerable pupils
Day 1	• Phone call home. • If no contact is made by phone call, a text or email is sent). • A home visit may be needed.	• Home visit (daily) • If no contact is made for 'vulnerable pupils', inform DSL immediately who will contact the relevant agency.
Day 2	• Phone call home • If no contact is made by phone call, a text or email is sent • A home visit may be needed.	
Day 3	• Home visit daily until contact is made, (see guidance on exceptions in section 14).	

No of days absence with contact	Pupils	Vulnerable pupils
Days 1 - 4	If the school has a concern about a pupil, a home visit may be conducted.	Home visit – daily
Day 5	A home visit will always be considered on the fifth day of absence and at regular intervals beyond that of no longer than 5 consecutive days.	