# PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

## Loatlands Primary School

## March 2026

| Document control | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Document Title** | Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy | | | |
| **Document Type:** | Policy (Internal) | **Version number:** | 1 | |
| **Author (name & job title):** | | Alison Willis (Headteacher) | | |
| **Date Formally approved:** | 26.03.2026 | **Formal Approval by:** | *Bryan Kennedy* (LAB Chair) | |
| **Review information:** | Short review date to be in line with new behaviour policy | **Next Review Due By:** July 2026 | | |
| **School Lead** | Mrs Alison Willis | | | |

| Document History | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Date** | **Reviewer** | **Note of revisions** |
| March 2026 | Mrs Alison Willis (Headteacher) | No major revisions needed |
| | | |

# Contents

1. Introduction ..... 3
2. Principles and Ethos ..... 5
3. Attendance Responsibilities ..... 8
4. Working together with parents to improve attendance ..... 11
5. How absence and attendance is categorised ..... 14
6. Absence from school due to illness ..... 14
7. Other absences from school ..... 15
8. Day to Day Procedures ..... 19
8.4.4 Graduated Response to Absence (School Intervention) ..... 21
8.5 Graduated Approach to Punctuality ..... 22
9. Safeguarding Absence Procedures ..... 24
10. Supporting Attendance and Punctuality ..... 24
11. Persistent and Severe Absence Strategy ..... 26
11.4 Communication of the Strategy: Graduated Approach to Absence ..... 28
12. Attendance Legal Intervention ..... 29
13. The National Framework for Penalty Notices ..... 29
14. Monitoring and Analysing Attendance and Punctuality ..... 31
15. Part-time Timetables ..... 32
16. Flexi-Schooling and Home Education ..... 32
17. Elective Home Education ..... 32
18. Summary ..... 33
Appendix A: Definition of Parental Responsibility ..... 34
Appendix B: Definition of Statutory (compulsory) School Age ..... 35
Appendix C: How Long Should You Keep Your Child Off School ..... 36
Appendix D: Request for Leave of Absence ..... 37

## 1. Introduction

**1.1** Throughout this policy the term 'parent' generally refers to:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- All those who have parental responsibility (**Appendix A**) for a child or young person;
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e lives with and looks after the child)

**1.2** Throughout this policy the term 'attendance' may also refer to absence and punctuality (lateness)

**1.3** Abbreviations used throughout this policy:

CEO Chief Executive Officer
CME Child Missing in Education
DFE Department for Education
DSL Designated Safeguarding Lead
EAL Pupils with English as an Additional Language
EHCP Educational Health Care Plan
FSM Free School Meal Pupils
IHCP Individual Health Care Plan
LA Local Authority
LAB Local Academy Board
LAC Looked After Child (A child is looked after by LA if he or she is in their care or if he or she is provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours by)
PA Persistent Absence (attendance less than 90%)
PP Pupil Premium
PPOE Pupil Missing Out on Education
SA Severely Absent (attendance less than 50%)
SEND Special Educational Need/Disability
SENDCO Special Educational Needs/Disability Co-Ordinator
SW Pupils with a Social Worker

**1.4** Other documents and legislation which relate to this policy include:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance – Department for Education 2024
- Equality Act 2010
- UN Convention on Rights of The Child 1992
- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Keeping Children Safe in Education - Department for Education 2024
- Children Missing in Education - Department for Education 2024
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs - Department for Education 2023
- Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) 2012 & 2013

- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Special Education Needs/Inclusion Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at school 2015
- Pupil Premium Strategy
- Complaints Policy

## 2. Principles and Ethos

### 2.1 Excellent school attendance, high expectations and future prospects

Loatlands Primary School consider excellent school attendance as paramount to pupils achieving their full potential and therefore, enhancing lifelong outcomes. Excellent attendance is central to academic attainment, moral and social development and it is critical in enhancing well-being. It is with this in mind, that we set expectations of excellent attendance for all our pupils.

Evidence shows pupils with excellent school attendance are more likely to reach higher standards of achievement and be at less risk of exposure to crime and other safeguarding risks.

Excellent attendance is a learned behaviour. Therefore, we place equal importance on high attendance and excellent punctuality to all our pupils, including those who are not of statutory school age (**Appendix B**).

We believe that excellent attendance and punctuality in the early years of school develops and establishes attitudes towards school attendance which impacts on future school attendance and ultimately academic success and social and emotional well-being. Similarly, excellent attendance and punctuality post 16 establishes and develops attitudes to towards attendance in the workplace and thus lifelong achievements.

Therefore, each child enrolled at each of our schools is expected to attend every day, on time, so that they can achieve their full potential. We monitor and manage attendance and punctuality across all year groups according to this policy and statutory guidance. It is acknowledged however, that parents of children who are not of statutory school age cannot be subject to legal processes if their child has poor school attendance.

Department for Education – 'Working together to improve school attendance' August 2024

***The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment***. *At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%)*

*For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent)3 and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study)*

The findings confirm the strong link between absence and attainment. Schools can offer a broad range of benefits to children including the opportunities to learn and gain vital qualifications. However, the benefits of school go beyond academic results. They can also be places of social and emotional development. If we want to offer every child the best chance in life, it must start with ensuring that they can regularly attend school.

### 2.2 Attendance is everyone's responsibility

Securing excellent school attendance and promoting the importance of such, is the responsibility of the whole school community. This includes, but is not limited to; Multi-Academy Trust CEO and Trust Board, the Director of School Improvement, Senior Leadership Teams in schools, school staff (teaching and support), governors, parents, carers and the pupils themselves. Each school ensures that every member of the school community understands their roles and responsibilities with regard to attendance, is consistent in their communication with parents and pupils and receives the relevant training required to support excellent attendance.

Each school has a named senior leader responsible for the strategic lead of attendance know as the school's senior attendance champion and a name linked governor.

The Senior Attendance Champion for this school is: Mrs Alison Willis and they can be contacted on parents@loatlands.pfschools.org.uk The Local Academy Board has a named link governor for attendance who is Mr Bryan Kennedy and they can be contacted on parents@loatlands.pfschools.org.uk

Attendance is a standing item at LAB and TB Committee meetings.

**2.2 Attendance is integral and linked to all aspects of school life**

Loatlands Primary School promotes excellent attendance in the first instance, by ensuring that pupils and their families are provided with an environment where they feel safe, included, valued, supported and are inspired by an accessible and innovative curriculum. We recognise that excellent attendance is integral to the school's ethos and culture and that approaches to the curriculum, behaviour management, well-being, inclusivity and attendance are all inextricably linked and impact upon one another.

**2.3 Culture of support and inclusivity**

Where there are concerns about a child's attendance or attendance is a challenge, it is our aim to work with our pupils and their families in a supportive manner to improve attendance by removing any barriers. Loatlands Primary School recognises the importance of building strong relationships with our pupils and their families.

Where a pupil has a medical condition (physical or emotional), a disability, a special educational need or indeed any other factor which may present a barrier to attendance we uphold our expectation of excellent attendance. We endeavour to work with these pupils and their families, considering their individual needs, in order to make reasonable and supportive adjustments to facilitate excellent school attendance.

Where parents are facing challenges in getting their child to attend school, they should contact the school in order to seek support and resolve any potential underlying issues so that attendance can be improved. Older pupils are encouraged to be proactive in speaking to a trusted adult in school, should they have concerns about attending school.

Offering bespoke, individual support, encouragement and making reasonable adjustments to facilitate excellent school attendance, for those facing challenges or over coming barriers, is always our priority.

**2.4 Use of resources**

As part of our commitment to promoting excellent school attendance schools ensure that attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced. This may include both

financial (for example, effective use of pupil premium funding) and human (deployment of senior leaders, attendance and pastoral staff, external agencies and professionals) resources.

**2.5 Celebrating and Incentivising Excellent and Significantly Improved Attendance**

Each school has individual ways of promoting and incentivising excellent and significantly improved attendance. All schools will demonstrate the benefits of excellent school attendance throughout school life (For example, through displays, assemblies, registration periods and where appropriate through praise and reward to year groups, classes and individual pupils)

Whole school attendance each week will be displayed on the attendance board in the school office (updated every Friday afternoon).

**2.6 Our Commitment**

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

Working across schools, MATS and LAs to share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

## 3. Attendance Responsibilities

**CEO and Trust Board –** including but not limited to;

- Recognising the importance of a school attendance culture and promoting it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties to ensure consistency in attendance systems and processes.
- Ensure its school work to build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Providing support, challenge and accountability regarding attendance across the trust.
- Having an understanding of the attendance trends across the trust and the actions in place to improve/sustain high attendance including for vulnerable groups.
- Having an understanding of trust attendance performance in comparison to national averages and progress towards targets
- Receiving regular reports on attendance

**Trust Director of School Improvement –** including but not limited to;

- Providing strategic leadership across the Trust on the national attendance agenda and leading on the development of, and compliance with, the Trust's Strategic Plan for Attendance
- Leading on a strategy that supports pupils and families to ensure at least good attendance and tackle barriers to attending across the Trust, it's schools, specific cohorts of pupils and individual pupils.
- Ensuring that each school in the Trust consistently implements current statutory guidance, legislation, policy, procedures and ethos .
- Advising and guiding the CEO.
- Developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Trust's Strategic Plan for Attendance.
- Monitoring overall Trust and individual school targets for attendance including vulnerable groups.
- Holding schools within the Trust to account for compliance with attendance policies, processes and strategies.
- Designing and implementing systems for monitoring compliance across the Trust in collaboration with the Head of Governance.
- Reporting to the CEO, Trust Board and other relevant groups within the Trust.

**Headteachers/SLTs –** including but not limited to;

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a while school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance
- Ensure the accurate completion of admission and attendance registers
- Ensure robust daily processes to follow up absence are in place
- Understanding the Trust Strategic Plan for Attendance and supporting the Trust in its development, implementation and review.

- Accountable for attendance data, developing and implementing robust data collection and analysis to identify attendance patterns and trends, providing recommendations on action.
- Promoting positive attitudes by pupils and families towards education
- Engaging with and supporting pupils and families in overcoming barriers to attendance/punctuality, using innovative strategies.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Visiting and working with families in order to pursue concerns about attendance and other welfare issues. During such visits, formulating strategies, as appropriate, to the family.
- Facilitating effective partnerships between pupils, parents/carers, families, the school and external agencies.
- Liaising between student's home and school involving other support agencies as appropriate, including social services, education, psychologists, medical and counselling services.
- Providing pupils, parents/carers and schools with an effective advice and support service to develop best practice.

**Teaching Staff/Support Staff** - including but not limited to:

- Understand that attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils including their safeguarding and welfare and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school.
- Follow and implement the school's attendance expectations
- Ensure the accurate and timely recording of attendance via pupil registers
- Understand and follow the school's procedures for student absence reporting
- Understand and follow child missing from education procedures
- Report concerns around attendance for a student to the school's senior attendance champion or designated safeguarding lead as appropriate
- Understand the attendance trends for the classes that you teach
- Act as a support to students who maybe struggling with poor attendance and help them to overcome barriers to attendance
- Create a welcoming environment for all students who return to school following an absence
- Work in collaboration and communicate effectively with parents through parent consultations where absence is having an impact on achievement (teaching staff only)

**Governing Bodies –** including but not limited to;

- Providing support, challenge and accountability to the Head Teacher/ School Strategic Lead for Attendance regarding attendance
- Having an understanding of the attendance trends across the school and the actions in place to improve/sustain high attendance including for vulnerable groups.
- Having an understanding of school attendance performance in comparison to national averages and progress towards targets
- Receiving regular reports on attendance from the Head Teacher/ school's senior attendance champion
- Ensuring the consistent implementation of this policy and that is does not discriminate on any grounds

**School's Senior Attendance Champion / Attendance Officer / Family Support Worker** – including but not limited to;

- The day-to-day implementation of this policy and attendance management procedures
- Ensuring all staff, parents, carers and pupils are aware of the school's attendance expectations

- Regularly monitoring attendance data and identifying patterns/trends (including for vulnerable groups and individual pupils) and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts are an area of focus.
- Developing, implementing and reviewing strategic approach and action plans to address areas of development/improving attendance
- Monitoring the impact of attendance interventions
- Ensuring the effective deployment of resources to promote excellent attendance across the school, vulnerable groups and for individual pupils
- Ensuring the accurate and timely reporting of attendance data to the LAB and Trust
- Ensuring that relevant staff with key responsibilities (eg PP, EAL, SENDCOs, heads of year etc) are aware of attendance performance and are accountable for excellent attendance within their areas of responsibility
- Communicating with pupils and parents regarding attendance, including individual pupil attendance
- Ensuring that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education
- Informing the LA of CME, PPOE, pupils on a part-time timetable and pupils being deleted from the admissions register
- Developing and reviewing Attendance Action Plans/Attendance contracts to support the improvement of pupil attendance/punctuality
- Develop and implement strategies of rewards, incentives and competitions to encourage good attendance
- Advising school staff and parents/carers on the implications of attendance legislation.

## 4. Working together with parents to improve attendance

We aim for **all** pupils' attendance to be in line with or above national averages which means **no more than 6 days (12 sessions absent)** in any one year. To achieve this, we are committed to successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home and in school working collaboratively in partnership with families:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Expect** | • Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a cultre where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learning by prioritising attendance improvement across the school. |
| **Monitor** | • Use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched. |
| **Listen and understand** | • When a pattern is spotted, we will discuss this with pupils and parents so we can listen and understand the barriers to attendance and agree how we can all work together to resolve them. |
| **Facilitate Support** | • We will remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues |
| **Formalise Suppport** | • Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, we will work togther to exlain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances we may do this by formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order |
| **Enforce** | • Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or being engaged with, we may request support through the local authority through a statutory intervention, a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to education. |

**4.1 Attendance and Punctuality expectations of pupils and parents**

We believe that it is important to explain to parents/carers the impact of missing days when pupils miss their education because of non-attendance. The information below shows the impact of this in lost learning time. Consistently strong attendance in school is crucial to ensuring children make progress in their learning which in turn will lead to increased success in later life. There are 365 days in a year, there are 190 school days and 176 days to go on holidays, family time, visits, shopping, household jobs and other appointments.

| The impact of lost learning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Attendance during one school year** | **Equals approximate days of absence** | **Equals approximate weeks of absence** | **Equals approximate lessons missed** |
| 95% | 9 days | 2 weeks | 40 lessons |
| 90% | 19 days | 4 weeks | 80 lessons |
| 85% | 29 days | 6 weeks | 120 lessons |
| 80% | 38 days | 8 weeks | 160 lessons |
| 75% | 48 days | 10 weeks | 200 lessons |
| 70% | 57 days | 11.5 weeks | 230 lessons |
| 65% | 67 days | 13.5 weeks | 270 lessons |

| The impact of lateness on learning | |
|---|---|
| **Minutes per day during the school year** | **Equals approximate number of days teaching lost in a year** |
| 5 mins | 3 days |
| 10 mins | 6 days |
| 15 mins | 9 days |
| 20 mins | 12 days |
| 30 mins | 18 days |

To support strong attendance we expect **Parents/Carers**– including but not limited to:

- Ensuring that their child(ren) attend school daily and have excellent school attendance
- Providing up to date and accurate contact information
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact
- Ensuring that their child (ren) are punctual
- Not taking their child(ren) out of school during term time for holidays, only request a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so 2 weeks in advance.
- Informing the school of their child's absence on the first day of absence

- Keeping in regular contact with the school during a period of absence
- Contacting the school for support if school attendance/punctuality is a challenge
- Book any medical appoint around the school day where possible

**Pupils** – including but not limited to

- Attending lessons and off-site activities as arranged by the school
- Being punctual to lessons
- Talking to an adult in school if they find attending school/being punctual a challenge

**4.2 The law on school attendance**

*Parents have a legal responsibility to make sure that their child receives an education at school or by education otherwise than at school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.* Department for Education – 'Working together to improve school attendance' August 2024

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at school.

**4.3 The consequences of failing to secure a child's regular attendance at school**

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. A child is of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday until the last Friday in June in the year in which they become 16, provided that their 16th birthday falls before the start of the next school year.

- 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)

Both parents, all natural parents, whether married or not; all those with parental responsibility for child or young person; these who have day to day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after the child) are equally liable for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and on time, regardless of who the child resides with or who is the main carer.

Therefore, they may both contacted when deemed necessary in managing attendance and punctuality. Similarly, where it is necessary to enforce statutory action (such as issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices) both parents will be liable.

## 5. How absence and attendance is categorised

Attendance at school is recorded using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes. These codes allow schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics. Absence from school falls into 2 categories – authorised and unauthorised. Only the school can authorise an absence, not parents or carers.

An **authorised absence** is where:-

1) A child is too ill to attend school (as per the UK Health Security Agency guidance, appendix C) and
    - after a period of 5 days medical evidence has been provided if requested
    - for a child who has already been absent from **school for 6 days or more** and medical evidence is provided if requested
    - medical evidence is provided for absence immediately before or after a period of school holiday
    - medical evidence is provided where there is a regular pattern to illness absence
2) Evidence is provided for exceptional medical appointments
3) The absence is unavoidable and exceptional
4) A leave of absence for exceptional circumstances has been granted by the school

An **unauthorised absence** is where:-

1) The school considers that the pupil was well enough to attend school but did not
2) Medical evidence is not provided for an illness absence of 6 days or more if requested
3) Medical evidence is not provided for a child who has already been absent due to illness from school for 6 days or more if requested
4) Medical evidence is not provided for illness absence immediately before or after a period of school holiday
5) Medical evidence is not provided where there is a regular pattern to illness absence
6) The school considers that the absence was not unavoidable or exceptional
7) A leave of absence request is declined but still taken (this includes holidays in term time)
8) Reasons for absence have been falsified

## 6. Absence from school due to illness

All pupils should attend school unless they are too ill to do so. Illness may be either a physical illness or a mental health/emotional wellness issue. The school will request reasonable medical evidence in cases where they need clarification to accurately record absence in the attendance register. Only where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence.

However, illnesses may not mean a child cannot attend school. Schools and parents are asked to refer to the UK Health Security Agency guidance **'How long should you keep your child off school'** (**Appendix C**)

Where a child requires medication throughout the school day to enable them to attend school parents/carers should liaise with the school who may make suitable arrangements in line with the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy**.** If there are circumstances affecting a child's health and ability to attend school parents/carers should again liaise with the school so that reasonable adaptations

can be made (For example, in hay fever seasons it is not necessary to keep a child at home when school may be able to make adaptions).

Where a pupil has significant health or medical needs schools may develop a personalised 'Health Care Plan' which it will implement to ensure that the pupil continues to have excellent school attendance.

Schools encourage parents to notify them on the first and every day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools record absences as authorised where pupils cannot attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related).

Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention.

Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes. The school does not expect parents to ask the GP for a fit note. Where a consultant is involved in supporting the child any correspondence from them could be provided. All pupils should return to school as soon as they are well enough.

All pupils should return to school as soon as they are well enough.

**6.1 Pupils who are too ill to attend school**

Pupils with long term illness or other health needs may need additional support to continue education, such as alternative provision arranged by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. This applies whether or not the child is registered at a school and whatever type of school they attend. The education must be full-time or as close to full-time as the child's health allows. DfE's statutory guidance on ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs sets out that local authorities should provide education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. Local authorities should have a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs.

## 7. Other absences from school

There are very few circumstances where other absence from school will be authorised.

**7.1.1 Medical Appointments** Schools encouraged parents and carers where possible to make routine medical, dental and opticians outside the school day. 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. Parents will be asked to provide evidence of medical appointments which fall inside the school day.

**7.1.2 Hospital Appointments** Schools will ask parents are required to provide evidence of hospital appointments which fall inside the school day. Parents should avoid taking the child out for the entire school day for an appointment when it is practical for them to attend for part of the day. If the school considers that the child could have attend for part of the day but is absent for the whole day a proportionate unauthorised absence will be recorded.

**7.1.3 Requests for Leave of Absence – exceptional circumstances**

Generally, the DfE guidance 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. Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be made at **least 2 weeks in advance** of the event and in writing using the Leave of Absence Request Form given in **Appendix D.** *Retrospective approval for absence cannot be granted*. Parents do not have the right of appeal if a request for a leave of absence is declined, the head teacher's decision is final. We understand that in some circumstances notice of 2 weeks will not be possible. In these circumstances please contact the school office and arrange to speak to the Headteacher / Principal.

Where requests for leave of absence are not authorised:

- for pupils who have already been absent from school for **6 days or more**, regardless of the reasons for previous absence.
- for pupils **when the requested leave of absence will mean that they have absence amounting to 6 days or more.**
- during periods of public examinations or internal school assessments.
- for holidays during term time regardless of circumstances.

Where leave of absence is NOT authorised and parents decide to take pupils out of school despite the school's decision, absence will be recorded as unauthorised and subject to a fixed penalty notices (fine). Only in extraordinary circumstances will unauthorised absence not be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

If the school grants a leave of absence request and subsequently obtains evidence that indicates an application was falsified, the school reserves the right to amend the child's attendance records to record the absence as unauthorised and apply for the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.

Where a pupil fails to return to school after an agreed period of leave of absence, absence will be recorded as unauthorised, a penalty notice (fine) requested, and they may be reported to the Local Authority as 'A Child Missing in Education' and potentially lose their place at the school.

**7.1.4 Absences due to religious observance**

A request for leave of absence wherever possible should be made 2 weeks prior to the date of the religious observance. As a general rule 'a day exclusively set apart from 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. The school will not authorise further days in addition to the day exclusively set apart for religious observance.

**7.1.5 Absences for Elite Sporting Events and Pathways**

Elite sport is sport at the highest level of competition, county, national and international. Where an elite sporting organisation requires a pupil to participate in a weekly scheduled training session or event a leave of absence form should be completed by the parent(s)/carers(s) and accompanied by an official supporting letter from the relevant sporting organisation. This letter should confirm the selection of the pupil in an elite performance squad or pathway and the necessity to regularly train during the school day in order to be an ongoing member of that squad/pathway. The request for this type of leave is considered by a member of the senior leadership team and will be reviewed on a termly basis.

Requests will not be considered from parent()/carer(s) without the required evidence as outlined above. The school is not able to authorise absence for extra training sessions when not requested/required by the organisation who have selected the pupil.

If the request is approved the school will contact the sporting organisation directly for additional information such as evidence of their safeguarding procedure and confirmation that the necessary vetting checks have been undertaken.

**7.1.5 Absences for participating in a regulated performance**

A school can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours. The school can only do so where the local authority has granted a licence for the pupil to take part in a performance which is 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 there is a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) covering the pupil and this has been issued by the local authority in whose area the performance will take place. Whilst the school is able to grant leaves of absence on these occasions attendance will be monitored and where this becomes of concern, they may contact to local authority who granted the licence.

**7.1.6 Children Missing in Education**

Where a pupil has been absent from school for a period of **20** consecutive school days without authorisation or has not returned within **10** days after an authorised (requested) absence a pupil can be removed from the admissions register when the school and LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil.

| Circumstance | Number of Days which maybe be authorised | Additional Notes<br><br>All requests MUST be made in writing, 2 weeks in advance using Appendix D |
|---|---|---|
| Religious Observance | 2 days in any one academic year | • additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and will be subject to a fixed penalty notice |
| Family wedding / religious celebration that falls on a school day. | 1 day in any one period of absence<br><br>Maximum of 3 days in any one academic year | • No time will be authorised for travelling in the UK<br>• additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and will be subject to a fixed penalty notice<br>• Evidence of the event will need to be provided |
| Family Emergency/compassionate leave | 2 days in any one period of absence<br><br>Maximum of 3 days in any one academic year | • additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice |
| Participation in an arts/theatre events as part of a professional organisation that falls on a school day. | **Dependent on LA license**<br><br>**Absence must <u>not</u> be authorised if licence is not obtained by parents from LA (theatre/arts)** | • No time will be authorised for travelling in the UK<br>• additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice<br>• **Parents are required to obtain a licence from the LA**<br>• **Not to be authorised if a pupil's absence will mean amounting to 6 days or more**<br>• **School to make arrangements for pupil to receive a suitable education**<br>o For not less than 6 hours per week and<br>o During each complete period of 4 weeks or if less than 4 weeks during that period, for periods of time not less than 3 hours a day and<br>o On days where pupils would be expected to attend school and<br>o For not more than 5 hours on any such day |
| Participation in a sporting event that falls on a school | Maximum of 3 days in any one academic year unless there are | • No time will be authorised for travelling in the UK<br>• additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| day – **competing at a county level or above only** | extraordinary circumstances | |
| Gypsy/Roma and Traveller Absence | NA but only travel for occupational circumstances | • Absences will not be granted for any other reasons other than occupational circumstances |

Schools are under no obligation to provide work for pupils who are absent from school, unless parents/carers have received a licence from the local authority for their child to take part in sporting/arts/theatre events as part of a professional organisation, as detailed above.

Remote learning for pupils unable to attend school will only be provided in exceptional circumstances (e.g. long term illness supported by medical evidence, unexpected school closure).

Where a pupil fails to return to school after an agreed period of leave of absence, absence will be recorded as unauthorised, a fixed penalty notice (fine) requested and they may be reported to the Local Authority as 'A Child Missing in Education' and potentially lose their place at the school.

**7.1.7 Grounds for Deleting a Pupil from School register** –

Taken from DfE – 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' August 2024

***Ground F - the pupil has not returned following a leave of absence - regulation 9 (1)(h)***

*246. Where a pupil has been granted a leave of absence and:*

- *the pupil has not attended school within the ten school days immediately after the end of the period that the leave was granted for,*
- *the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause, and*
- *the school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances,*

*but:*

- *they have not succeeded, or*
- *they have succeeded but they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any reasonable steps that could be taken (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance.*

*247. DfE's guidance on Children Missing Education sets out the expectations for schools and local authorities in respect of making reasonable efforts to find out a pupil's location and circumstances.*

## 8. Day to Day Procedures

### 8.1 Admissions Register

All pupils are placed on an admissions (school roll) and attendance register**.** The admissions register must include specific information.

#### 8.1.1 Expected First Day of Attendance

Pupils (both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) must be entered on the admissions register on the first day they are expected to attend. If a pupil fails to attend on the expected first day of attendance the school must strive to locate the pupil and establish the reason for not attending.

When a pupil is added to the admissions register (other than at the usual transition points, for example, pupils who are registered at secondary school at the start of year 7) the school must notify the LA within **5 days**.

**8.1.3 Deletion of a pupil from the admissions register (removal from school roll)**
There are specific circumstances where a pupil maybe removed from the admissions register (school roll)

**8.2 Attendance Registers**
Schools must take an attendance register at the start of each morning session and once during the afternoon session. Our schools use information management systems to ensure the accurate recording of attendance information, the ease of data analysis and information sharing.

Attendance registers are legal documents and must be preserved for a period of 6 **years**.

The school uses the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are recorded in a consistent way.

Attendance registers should not be amended or altered unless the reason for absence is established after the register has closed. Any amendments to the register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Schools must include specific information in attendance registers.

**8.2.1 Morning Registration**
The school gates open to welcome pupils at 8,45am and close at 8.55am. Pupils arriving after the gates have closed should report to the school office and will be signed in along with the time arrived and reason for lateness. Pupils who are late, after the gates have closed, will be marked as late before the register closes.

Morning registration is open from 8.45am to 9.00am. Pupils arriving after registration closes (after 9.15am), will be marked as late after register closes. This is an unauthorised absence and negatively impacts a pupils attendance percentage. When a late pupil arrives on site they must register at the office and a reason for lateness must be provided.

**8.2.2 Afternoon Registration**
Afternoon registration is open from 12.45pm to 1.30pm (staggered afternoon start times). Pupils arriving after registration closes (after 1.30pm), will be marked as late after register closes. This is an unauthorised absence and negatively impacts a pupils attendance percentage

**8.2.3 Lesson Registration**
In secondary schools attendance and punctuality registers are also taken for individual lessons.

**8.2.4 Leaving The Premises During the School Day**
If your child needs to leave school during lesson time to visit the doctor, dentist or optician, an email or letter must be sent to the school office beforehand and you must collect the child personally from school. We advise that, if possible, appointments are made after school or in holiday times. All children must be signed in and out of school in the arrivals/departure book in the school office.

**8.3 Notifying the school of your child's absence**

Parents/carers must notify school on the first day the child is unable to attend school by 9.30am.

Parents must give detailed reasons for absence. For example, 'child has a throat infection/been sick etc' rather than just 'unwell/poorly'.

All absences should be reported to: Loatlands School Office

Contact Details: 01536 903713, parents@loatlands.pfschools.org.uk, Studybugs app or MCAS app

**8.4 Graduated Response to Absence**
In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence the school and trust will follow a graduated response to absence.

**8.4.1 First Day Calling Process**
Once registers have closed the school will operate a first day calling process for any child whose parents/carers have not provided a reason for absence. Where a child (including those of non-statutory school age) is absent from school and parents/carers have not contacted the school to inform them of the reason for absence the school will record an unauthorised absence and follow safeguarding procedures to ascertain the reason for absence and whereabouts of the pupil. This will involve the school contacting parents and other named contacts on record. If by the third day of absence no contact has been made the school will carry out a home visit and report the absence to the DSL as a safeguarding concern. Schools will also utilise the use of text messages/emails as an additional means of establishing contact.

Where there are pre-existing concerns about the safety or well- being of a pupil the school may carry out a home visit on the first day of absence. Where there are serious concerns about the safety and well-being of a pupil whose reason for absence is not known the school may contact the police, local authority or social services.

**8.4.2 Emergency Contacts**
The school will ensure that there are at least two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation. The school will regularly ensure that these emergency contacts are up to date.

**8.4.3 When reasons for absence have not been provided**
When reasons have not been provided by the parent(s) and/or carer(s) for unexplained absence from school it is important for the school to contact quickly to speak with you about the reasons. It may be that the school can offer some additional help or support in some way to address barriers to attendance. For example:

- Consider if an Early Help Assessment is appropriate
- To offer support through an Attendance Support Plan
- Send a letter asking for reasons for the absence
- Make an informal telephone call from our attendance officer/family support worker
- Suggest referring to a voluntary agency or community group
- All pupils and parents/carers are urged to contact the school if they feel that they are facing any such challenges. Parents should contact the school office in the first instance.

**8.4.4 Graduated Response to Absence (School Intervention)**
The following graduated response will be used in relation to an unexplained absence from school:

| GRADUATED RESPONSE TO ABSENCE (SCHOOL INTERVENTION) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| NOTES:<br>• **Any safeguarding concerns should be dealt with as a priority and following policies and procedures**<br>• **Process applies to ALL pupils including those of non-statutory school age**<br>• **Process can be expedited where there are attendance/safeguarding concerns**<br>• Suggest attendance is reviewed half termly<br>• Starting point will depend on the needs and priority in each school<br>• Starting point will depend on needs of family<br>• Make letters personal to pupil<br>• Send via post, email etc directly to the parents, not to be given to pupil to take home | | | |
| | **Scenario** | **Action** | **Documentation** |
| **First Day of Absence** | No reason given for absence | School to call parents and all emergency contacts to ascertain whereabouts of pupil | School to keep record of dates/times of phone calls |
| **Second Day of Absence** | No reason established for absence | School to call parents and all emergency contacts to ascertain whereabouts of pupil | School to keep record of dates/times of phone calls etc |
| **Third Day of Absence** | No reason established for absence | School to call parents and all emergency contacts to ascertain whereabouts of pupil<br><br>Carry out home visit<br><br>Log on CPOMs | School to keep record of dates/times of phone calls etc |
| **Day 4-10 of Absence** | No reason established for absence | School to call parents and all emergency contacts to ascertain whereabouts of pupil<br><br>Follow CME procedures (ask class mates, liaise with schools attended by siblings, check with previous school, contact with other agencies known to family/police)<br><br>Escalate Safeguarding Concerns<br><br>Continue to make home visits | School to keep record of dates/times of phone calls/visits etc |
| **Day 10-20 of Absence** | No reason established for absence | Refer to LA as CME | School to keep record of dates/times of phone calls/visits etc |

## 8.5 Graduated Approach to Punctuality

Ensuring that pupils attend school on time not only helps to support a strong start to learning each day it also helps prepare pupils for the expectations of the world beyond school. The following graduated

approach to punctuality will address lateness before the register closes. Lateness after the register closes counts as an absence and will be included in the graduated response to attendance.

**GRADUATED RESPONSE TO LATENESS (SCHOOL INTERVENTION)**

NOTES:

- **Any safeguarding concerns should be dealt with as a priority and following policies and procedures**
- **Process applies to ALL pupils including those of non-statutory school age**
- **Process can be expedited where there are attendance/safeguarding concerns**
- Suggest attendance/punctuality is reviewed half termly
- Starting point will depend on the needs and priority in each school
- Starting point will depend on needs of family
- Make letters personal to pupil
- Send via post, email etc directly to the parents
- Any safeguarding concerns should be dealt with as a priority and following policies and procedures

| | **Scenario** | **Action** | **Documentation** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **STEP 1** | Lateness a concern<br><br>5 late marks (L code) in a 12-week period | School to send letter to parents from Headteacher | **Lateness Letter 1** with attendance certificate<br>or<br>**Lateness Letter 1 NS** (non-statutory school age) with attendance certificate |
| **STEP 2** | Punctuality not improved<br><br>7 late marks (L code) in a 12-week period | School to send letter to parents from Headteacher | **Lateness Letter 2** with attendance certificate<br>or<br>**Lateness Letter 2 NS** (non-statutory school age) with attendance certificate |
| **STEP 3** | Punctuality not improved<br><br>10 late marks (L code) in a 12-week period | Parents/carers asked to meet with head teacher/member of SLT<br><br>Notes of meeting kept (can be hand written and scanned)<br>Use RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY MEETING document<br><br>(review in 6 weeks – if improved action close, if no progress go to Step 4) | **Lateness Letter 3** invite to meeting with attendance certificate<br><br>RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY MEETING |
| **STEP 4** | Punctuality not improved and more than 15 lates in 12 week period | Parents/carers asked to meet with Attendance Support Officer and member of school SLT<br>**School send request for involvement to Attendance Support Officer with**<br>1) Copy of Punctuality Intervention record<br>2) Copy of current attendance certificate<br>3) Copy of RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY MEETING | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OTHER POSSIBLE STEPS** | Early Help<br>Referral to EIPT<br>Referral to OFPCC | | |
| **Punctuality Improves** | | | **Well done letter** |

## 9. Safeguarding Absence Procedures

In order to carry out Safeguarding responsibilities, when a pupil is absent from school for more than 5 days a member of school staff will be required to carry out a safe and well check on the child.

Home visits are important in helping the school to contact new or hard to reach families. They are particularly useful as they enable parents, carers or guardians to have contact with school, but in their own environment.

### 9.1 The safeguarding duty of schools:

- Pupils are refusing to come to school
- When there are attendance issues/concerns
- When pupils are being educated at home
- When all other means of contact with the family has failed
- To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact parents, carers or guardians have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the pupil.
- To work with parent(s)/carer(s) or guardians to support a child with an attendance issue.
- To collect from or drop off a child where there are concerns for a child's welfare if they travelled by other means.
- To drop off or collect work for a child when they are completing schoolwork from home e.g. following a suspension, exclusion, or medical issue.
- To visit a child who has been off school for a period of time, for example due to medical issues, so that they do not feel isolated from school.
- To investigate situations where there are suspicions that someone may be on holiday contrary to earlier indications.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns about a pupil – on the first day of absence where no reason for absence has been ascertained
- Where there are safeguarding concerns about a pupil – on the third day of absence where no reason for absence has been ascertained
- For pupils who are absent from school for 3 days where no reason for absence has been ascertained, this can be completed earlier if there are concerns raised.

Where a child is absent from school for a prolonged period, school staff must ensure they see the child at least weekly. Ideally, this is to be completed face to face, however where distance may be a concern this could be conducted remotely, however the child must be seen, not just parent(s)/carer(s). This does not apply to students who have requested a leave of absence, either authorised or unauthorised unless there are specific safeguarding concerns. Where a child is hospitalised, it is appropriate for a member of staff to liaise with medical professionals to establish the wellbeing and safety of the child.

## 10. Supporting Attendance and Punctuality

The Trust and our schools set high expectations of excellent attendance for all pupils. The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

**10.1 Attendance Intervention**
In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing attendance and punctuality the school will follow a 'Graduated Response' as detailed within this policy.

**10.2 Working with parents to improve attendance**
The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Attendance Officer/Education Welfare Officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENDCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

**10.3 SEND and health-related absences**
We recognise that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with disabilities to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHCP plans or IHCPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

The contact details for our SENDCo are:

Mrs Rebecca Robinson:

Tel - 01536 903713 Email - parents@loatlands.pfschools.org.uk

**10.4 Supporting pupils with mental health and safeguarding concerns**

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Schools will follow the DfE publication Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk). Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

The contact details for our Designated Safeguarding Lead are:

Mrs Rebecca Robinson – Main Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Tel - 01536 903713 Email - parents@loatlands.pfschools.org.uk

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than **15** school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will implement an Attendance Support Plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

## 11. Persistent and Severe Absence Strategy

### 11.1 Persistent Absence

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 10 days or more across a full school year), referred to as persistent absence, we work with the local authority to put in additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage persistently absent pupils. We consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

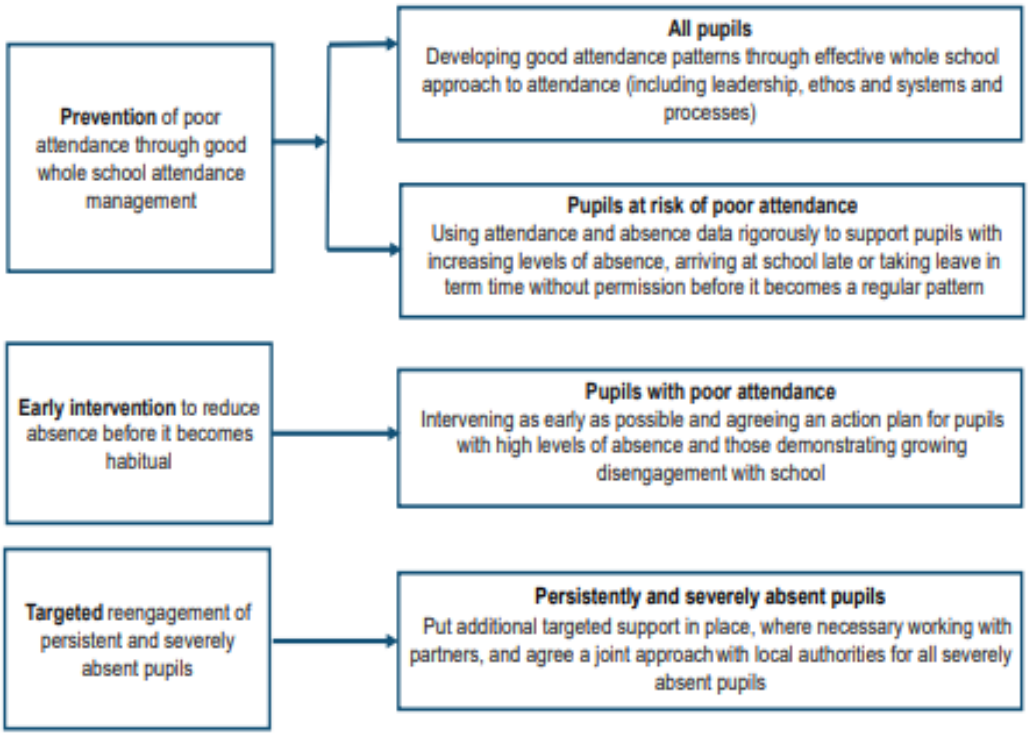
### 11.2 Severe Absence

In addition, we particularly focus on pupils who are absent from school more than they are present, those missing 50% or more of school, referred to as severely absence. Some pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

### 11.3 Our strategy to identify and support these pupils.

Severely and persistently absent pupils are an area of focus in our regular data monitoring approach, to identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible.

This will be a layered approach that will focus on prevention, early intervention and targeted support:




There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and persistent or severe absence, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC (Looked after Children)
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM (Free School Meals)
- Pupils with EAL (English as an Additional Language)
- Pupils with SEND (Special Education Need and Disability)
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of persistent and severe absence to attend school. These may include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHCP plan or IHCP may be appropriate.
- Considering whether an Early Help Assessment may be appropriate
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who are severely absent (attendance less than 50 %) and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of persistent or severe is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's

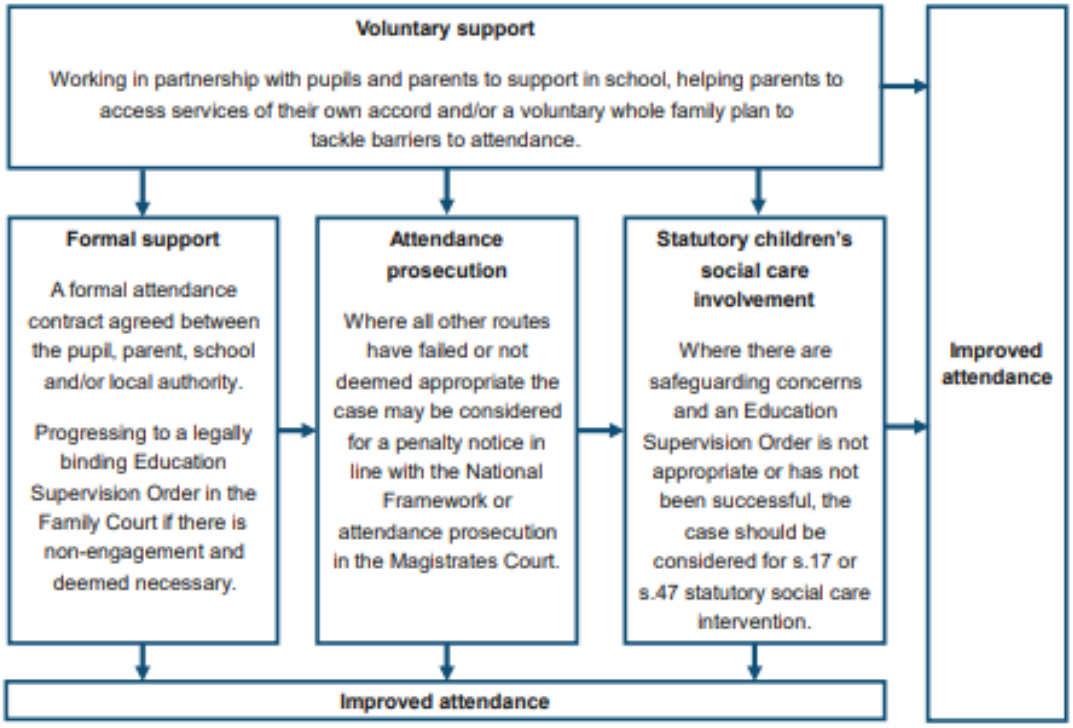
duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of absence following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 11.4 Communication of the Strategy: Graduated Approach to Absence

| GRADUATED RESPONSE TO ATTENDANCE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Scenario** | **Action** | **Documentation** |
| **STEP 1 (Prevention)** | Attendance is beginning to slip below school target of 97% | Informal support from school offered e.g. FSW support | |
| **STEP 2 (Early Intervention)** | Attendance trigger of 5 days/10 sessions or more of absence is hit. | School to send letter to parents from Headteacher<br><br>Informal support via telephone or in person from school attendance lead | **Attendance Letter 1** with attendance certificate<br>or<br>**Attendance Letter 1** NS (non-statutory school age) with attendance certificate |
| **STEP 3 (Early Intervention)** | Further absence from school<br><br>(5 weekly monitoring undertaken to reach 98% in period) | School to letter send to parents from Headteacher<br><br>Informal support via telephone or in person from school attendance lead | **Attendance Letter 2** with attendance certificate<br>or<br>**Attendance Letter 2** NS (non-statutory school age) with attendance certificate |
| **STEP 4 (Targeted Support)** | Further continued absence from school | Parents/carers asked to meet with Headteacher/member of SLT to establish Attendance Support Plan<br><br>Notes of meeting kept (can be hand-written and scanned)<br>Use RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY MEETING document alongside Attendance support plan<br><br>Consider referral to Local Authority and other services for support | **Attendance Letter 3** invite to meeting<br><br>RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY MEETING<br><br>**Attendance support plan established** |
| **Attendance does not improve** | Referral for fixed penalty notice or other statutory action to the local authority | | |
| **Attendance Improves** | Well done letter acknowledging improvement sent to parent and pupil | | |

## 12. Attendance Legal Intervention

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. The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect or parents fail to engage in the support being offered, the school will consider statutory action. This may involve requesting the LA to issue a fixed penalty notice (fine); referring to the LA to consider statutory action as described in the diagram below.




Further information on legal intervention can be found in 'Working together to improve school attendance' DfE August 2024

[Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)]

## 13. The National Framework for Penalty Notices

### 13.1 What is a penalty notice?

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 (with the exception of independent 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).

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used 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). Local authorities can consider earlier if there is a clear attempt to avoid the 5-day threshold.

**13.2 How penalty notices are issued**
Penalty notices must be issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, 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.

Where a penalty notice is issued by someone other than a local authority officer, the person issuing the penalty notice is expected to check with the local authority before doing so and must also send them copies of any penalty notices issued.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The school must have notified the parents of the days the pupil must not be present in a public place. This type of penalty notice is not included in the National Framework and therefore not subject to the same considerations about support being provided or count towards the limit as part of the escalation process in the case of repeat offences for non-attendance.

**13.3 What is the national threshold to issue a penalty notice?**
All schools in the Trust will follow the National Framework for Penalty Notices. **The threshold 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).

**13.4 Notices to improve**
A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support.

**13.5 Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences:**
*191. A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:*

- *The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.*
- *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.*

*192. Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.*

*193. For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn.*

Paragraphs 191-193 taken from DfE Working together to Improve school attendance, August 2024

## 14. Monitoring and Analysing Attendance and Punctuality

The School's senior Attendance Champion in each school will monitor and analyse attendance data **weekly** to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address attendance issues.

The school will collect and report attendance data to the Trust, Governors, School's Senior Leadership Team, lead professionals for vulnerable groups (e.g PP, SENDCO, EAL, heads of year etc) at least half-termly. Attendance will be reported to the CEO and Trust Board at least termly.

Data collected and analysed will include data for attendance, persistent absence and severe absence for:

- The school cohort as a whole
- Individual year groups
- Pupils from vulnerable groups
- Any other groups deemed to be at risk of poor attendance

A thorough analysis of data will be undertaken at both school and Trust level half-termly, termly and annually to identify patterns and trends; individual or groups of pupils needing support/intervention. Analysis will be used to develop and implement both cross Trust and individual school training and action plans/interventions to improve attendance.

Analysis will also include identification of:

- Types of absence (codes)
- Patterns in days of absence
- Lessons which have poor attendance
- Barriers to attendance

Attendance data will be bench marked against national data. The trust's strategic attendance lead will visit each school within the trust at least termly to review attendance data, analysis, trends, impact of intervention and progress towards targets.

Schools are legally required to share information from their attendance registers with the local authority and in the future with the DFE.

## 15. Part-time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In **very exceptional** circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a **temporary** part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. The use of part time or reduced timetables are used as a short term (ideally for no more than **6 weeks**) measure to ensure the successful return to full time education. The decision to place a pupil on a reduced timetable must be approved by the Headteacher following the completion of an Attendance Support Plan. These pupils must also be reported to the LA on a half termly basis. A part-time timetable should **not** be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a parttime timetable for a prolonged period.

## 16. Flexi-Schooling and Home Education

Parents are within their rights to make requests for flexi- schooling arrangements or to home educate their children. Any such requests should be discussed with the Headteacher. However, it is the ethos of the Trust that children are best placed to learn in school and therefore requests for flexi-schooling arrangements will not be granted and home education will be discouraged.

## 17. Elective Home Education

Parents have a right to educate their children at home and will be responsible for ensuring their child/ren is provided with a suitable education. *Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 provides that: "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable - (a)to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b)to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."* Taken from DfE guidance Elective home education

### 17.1 Notification of Withdrawal

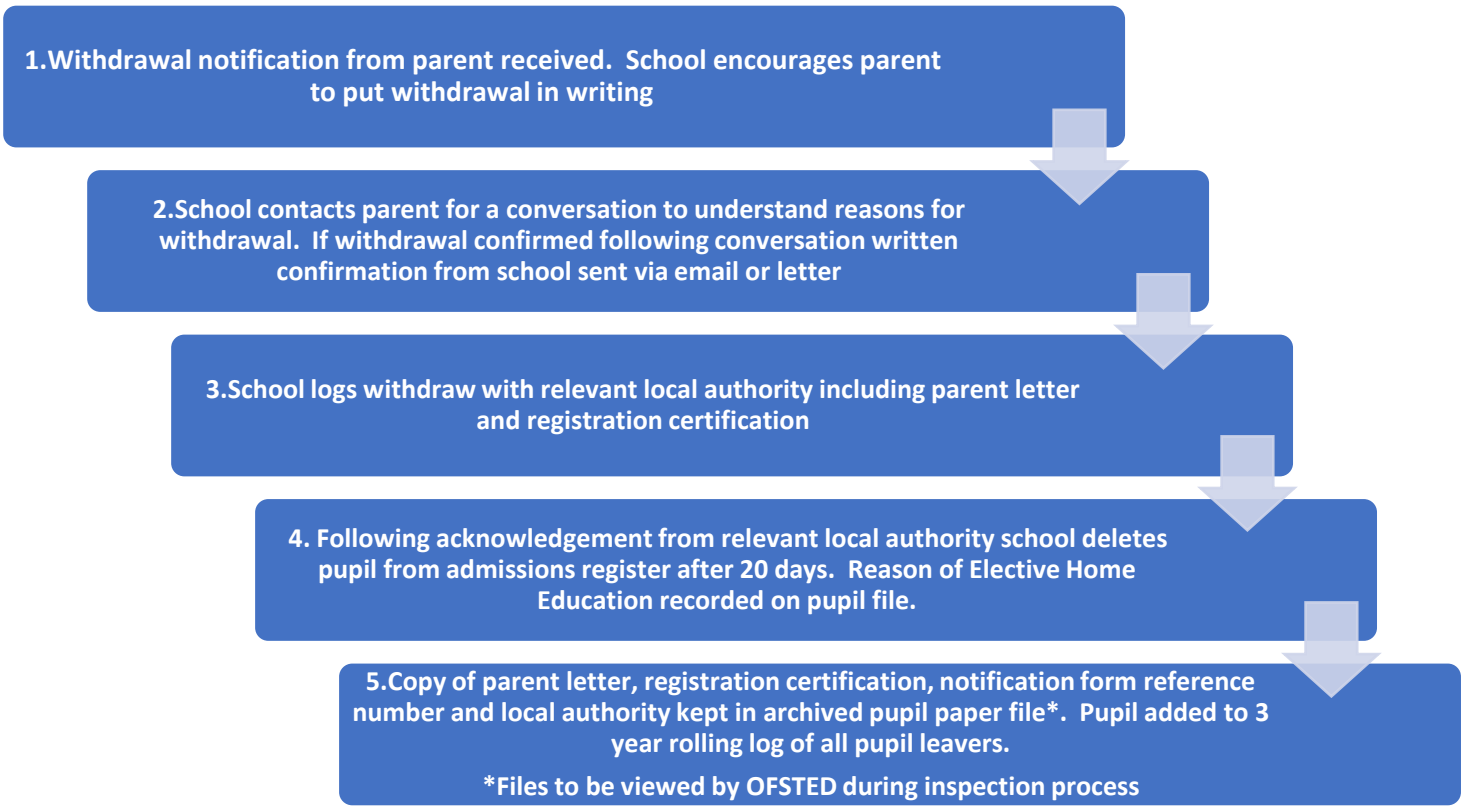
If a parent chooses to withdraw their child from school, we would encourage schools to request this withdrawal in writing although they are under no legal obligation to provide such notification unless their child is enrolled at a school in accordance with a school attendance order. Failure to notify in this instance could result in a risk of prosecution for not securing attendance at the school even if suitable home education is being provided.

### 17.2 School Expectations following the notification of withdrawal for a pupil from roll

It is a trust expectation that the Headteacher of the school will contact a parent who is withdrawing their child from school in order to understand the reasons behind this. A parent is not obligated to provide these reasons. The school will acknowledge this withdrawal in writing via letter or email to the parent upon receipt.

Once notification of the withdrawal has been received the local authority must be informed of all deletions from the admission registers when this takes place at a nonstandard transition time. This is done by completing the attached form for North Northants Local Authority: Child leaving your school to be home educated or West Northants Local Authority: Child leaving your school to be home educated.

The form must be support by a copy of the parent's letter informing the school of the child's home education and the child's registration certificate. **20 days** following this notification the child can be deleted from the school's admission register with an identified reason of Elective Home Education. A copy of this letter, certificate, completion of notification form and local authority acknowledgement must be kept on the pupil file for inspection by OFSTED as required. It is an expectation that all Pathfinder Schools will keep a rolling 3 year log of all pupils who have been pupil leavers.




## 18. Summary

Loatlands Primary School is committed to promoting excellent school attendance for all its pupils (both of statutory and non-statutory school age). We are also committed to working in a collaborative and supportive manner with pupils, families, external agencies and other schools and trusts to support excellent attendance.

## Appendix A: Definition of Parental Responsibility

Taken from Parental rights and responsibilities: Who has parental responsibility - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

**Who has parental responsibility**

A mother automatically has parental responsibility for her child from birth.

A father usually has parental responsibility if he's either:

- married to the child's mother
- listed on the birth certificate (after a certain date, depending on which part of the UK the child was born in)

You can apply for parental responsibility if you do not automatically have it.

**Births registered in England and Wales**

If the parents of a child are married when the child is born, or if they've jointly adopted a child, both have parental responsibility.
They both keep parental responsibility if they later divorce.

**Unmarried parents**

An unmarried father can get parental responsibility for his child in 1 of 3 ways:

- jointly registering the birth of the child with the mother (from 1 December 2003)
- getting a parental responsibility agreement with the mother
- getting a parental responsibility order from a court

**Births registered in Scotland**

A father has parental responsibility if he's married to the mother when the child is conceived or marries her at any point afterwards.
An unmarried father has parental responsibility if he's named on the child's birth certificate (from 4 May 2006).

**Births registered in Northern Ireland**

A father has parental responsibility if he's married to the mother at the time of the child's birth.
If a father marries the mother after the child's birth, he has parental responsibility if he lives in Northern Ireland at the time of the marriage.
An unmarried father has parental responsibility if he's named, or becomes named, on the child's birth certificate (from 15 April 2002).

**Births registered outside the UK**

If a child is born overseas and comes to live in the UK, parental responsibility depends on the UK country they're now living in.

**Same-sex parents**

Civil partners
Same-sex partners will both have parental responsibility if they were civil partners at the time of the treatment, eg donor insemination or fertility treatment.

Non-civil partners
For same-sex partners who are not civil partners, the 2nd parent can get parental responsibility by either:

- applying for parental responsibility if a parental agreement was made
- becoming a civil partner of the other parent and making a parental responsibility agreement or jointly registering the birth

## Appendix B: Definition of Statutory (compulsory) School Age

Children must get an education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16.

5 years old

Your child is of "compulsory school age" on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday. Children becoming **5 years old** between 1st January and 31st March are of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term after 1st April.

Notes:
Pupils who are not of statutory school age cannot have an absence coded as 'unauthorised'

Once children are of school age (even if they are in a Reception Class). They are subject to the same register coding and absence procedures as any other child.

## Appendix C: How Long Should You Keep Your Child Off School

Taken from [How long should you keep your child off school - checklist poster (text version) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)]

Promotional material

# How long should you keep your child off school - checklist poster (text version)

Updated 27 April 2022

**Applies to England**

| Yes | Until |
|---|---|
| Chickenpox | at least 5 days from the onset of the rash and until all blisters have crusted over |
| Diarrhoea and Vomiting | 48 hours after their last episode |
| Cold and flu-like illness (including COVID-19) | they no longer have a high temperature and feel well enough to attend. Follow the national guidance if they've tested positive for COVID-19 |
| Impetigo | their sores have crusted and healed, or 48 hours after they started antibiotics |
| Measles | 4 days after the rash first appeared |
| Mumps | 5 days after the swelling started |
| Scabies | they've had their first treatment |
| Scarlet fever | 24 hours after they started taking antibiotics |
| Whooping cough | 48 hours after they started taking antibiotics |

| No | But make sure you let their school or nursery know about |
|---|---|
| Hand, foot and mouth | Glandular fever |
| Head lice | Tonsillitis |
| Threadworms | Slapped cheek |

Further advice and guidance on managing cases of infectious diseases in all education and childcare settings is available.

## Appendix D: Request for Leave of Absence

**Request for Leave of Absence v2 August 2024**
To be made to the Head Teacher -at least **2 weeks** in advance of date of requested absence

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Name of School: | Name of Pupil: | |
| Class: | Year Group: | |
| Dates of planned absence: | From: | To: |
| Confirmed date of return to school: | | |
| Reason for Request (continue overleaf if necessary): | | |
| Name of Sibling<br><br>School Class/Year Group | Name of Sibling<br><br>School Class/Year Group | |

Parents are asked to note:

- The Attendance Policy fully complies with Government regulations. Statutory guidelines state **"Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances".**
- The school may seek advice from the Trust central team and liaise with the Headteachers of the schools' any siblings attend.
- Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be made at **least 2 weeks in advance** of the event.
- Retrospective approval for absence cannot be granted. Parents do not have the right of appeal if a request for a leave of absence is declined, the head teacher's decision is final.
- Leave of absence will NOT be granted for pupils who have already been absent from school for 6 days or more, regardless of the reasons for previous absence
- Leave of absence will NOT be granted for pupils when the requested leave of absence will mean that they have absence amounting to 6 days or more
- Leave of absence will NOT be granted during periods of public examinations or internal school assessments.
- Leave of absence will NOT be granted for holidays during term time regardless of circumstances.
- Where leave of absence is NOT authorised and parents decide to take pupils out of school despite the school's decision, absence will be recorded as unauthorised and subject to a fixed penalty notices (fine).
- If the schools grants a leave of absence request and subsequently obtains evidence that indicates an application was falsified, the school reserves the right to amend the child's attendance records to record the absence as unauthorised and apply for the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.
- Where a pupil fails to return to school after an agreed period of leave of absence, absence will be recorded as unauthorised, a fixed penalty notice (fine) requested and they may be reported to the Local Authority as 'A Child Missing in Education' and potentially lose their place at the school.
- Schools are under no obligation to provide work for pupils who are absent from school, unless parents/carers have received a licence from the LA for their child to take part in sporting/arts/theatre events as part of professional organisation, as detailed above.
- Unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) in a rolling 10-week period must be considered for a penalty notice under the new national penalty framework.

| Circumstance | Number of Days which maybe be authorised | Additional Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Religious Observance | 2 days in any one academic year | • Additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and will be subject to a fixed penalty notice |
| Family wedding / religious celebration that falls on a school day. | 2 days in any one period of absence<br><br>Maximum of 3 days in any one academic year | • No time will be authorised for travelling in the UK<br>• Additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and will be subject to a fixed penalty notice<br>• Evidence of the event will need to be provided |
| Family Emergency/compassionate leave | 2 days in any one period of absence<br><br>Maximum of 3 days in any one academic year | • Additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice |
| Participation in a performance | **Dependent on LA license**<br><br>**Absence must <u>not</u> be authorised if licence is not obtained by parents from LA** | • No time will be authorised for travelling in the UK<br>• Additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice<br>• **Parents are required to obtain a licence from the LA**<br>• **Not to be authorised if a pupil's attendance will mean amounting to 6 days or more**<br>• **School to make arrangements for pupil to receive a suitable education**<br>o For not less than 6 hours per week and<br>o During each complete period of 4 weeks or if less than 4 weeks during that period, for periods of time not less than 3 hours a day and<br>o On days where pupils would be expected to attend school and<br>o For not more than 5 hours on any such day |
| Participation in a sporting event – **competing at a county level or above only** | Maximum of 4 days in any one academic year unless there are extraordinary circumstances | • No time will be authorised for travelling in the UK<br>• Additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice |
| Gypsy/Roma and Traveller Absence | NA but only travel for occupational circumstances | • Absences will not be granted for any other reasons other than occupational circumstances |

**Name and Address of <u>both parents</u> (to be completed in all cases for all applications)**

**Signed (Parent with Parental Responsibility):** **Date:**

| **To be completed by school (tick as appropriate)**<br>○ **copy of full form retained on pupil record**<br>○ **copy of full form sent to parents** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pupil's current attendance % (YTD)** | | | **Absence in days already taken this academic year:** | |
| **Absence authorised in days:** | **No further action** | | **Register Code** | **Reason** |
| | | | | |
| **Unauthorised Absence in days:** | **Fixed Penalty Notice 10 or more sessions (1 session = ½ day) in the current or previous half term.** | | **Register Code** | **Reason** |
| | Yes | No | Not deemed as exceptional circumstances | O |
| | Yes | No | Unauthorised Holiday | G |
| | Yes | No | Pupil at level of persistent absence | O |
| | Yes | No | Religious observance above 2 day in academic year | O |
| | Yes | No | Family celebration above 2 days in academic year | O |
| | Yes | No | Exam period | O |
| | Yes | No | Other – please specify | O |
| | N/A | No | Retrospective Request | O |
| | Yes | No | Request evidence not provided/form incomplete | O |
| Head Teacher Signature: | | | Date: | |