The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust

Policy and Procedure

Attendance Policy

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The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust

Our Mission

Outstanding Catholic education for all pupils. As a family of schools, we will enable our young people to develop spiritually, morally, intellectually and personally, putting their faith into action, through serving Christ in others, in the church and in the world around them.

This policy was approved by the Resources Committee on behalf of the Trust Board

Signature:

Mrs Helen Mills
Chair of the Trust Board

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Table of Contents

Definitions 5

SECTION A 6

Purpose and Intent 6

Aims 6

Legal duty 7

SECTION B 9

Roles and Responsibilities 9

SECTION C 14

Authorised and Unauthorised absences 14

SECTION D 15

Severe absence 15

Family Holidays 15

SECTION E 16

Addressing attendance and punctuality concerns 16

Procedure for Tracking and Improving Attendance 16

BWCAT Attendance Interventions 18

SECTION F 23

Rewards and recognition 23

Part-time timetables 23

Children who cannot attend school because of health needs 24

Pupils absent from school due to Mental Health or their Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. 25

Re-integration of pupils following long term absence 26

Children Missing in Education (CME) 27

SECTION G 28

Legal Interventions 28

Policy review 31

SECTION H 32

Appendix 1 32

Leave of Absence during term time (Form) 32

Appendix 2 33

Codes for marking attendance and absence 33

Definitions

In this Attendance Policy, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

BWCAT	The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust.
Trust, we and our	Covers all of the schools within The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust and The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust Office.
Trust Board	The Directors of the Trust Board.
Academy Council	Means local governing body of the individual academy.
Governors	Means the governors appointed or elected to the Academy Council of the individual school.
CEO	The Chief Executive Officer for the Trust.
Executive Headteacher/Headteacher	Executive Headteacher/Headteacher responsible for individual academies.
Virtual School Head	(VSH) means the lead person within the Local Authority for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children.
Academy	Refers to the Academies within BWCAT.
Pupil	Refers to any pupil on roll at any of the BWCAT schools.
Parents	Refers to any person who holds parental responsibility for the pupil
Child and Children	Refers to children and young people under the age of 18 years.
Staff	Means all employees, temporary, casual, agency and contracted staff working for the Trust, volunteers and consultants.
Session	Is a term related to the recording of absence data - every school day must have two **'sessions'** (morning and afternoon), divided by a break, for which attendance must be recorded.
Authorised absence	Means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Unauthorised absence	Is where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for an absence.
Academic year	Means a school's academic year beginning with the first day of school after 31 July and ending with the first day of school after the following 31 July.

SECTION A

Purpose and Intent

We articulate this policy in accordance with the statutory guidance on Attendance in the DfE document, 'Working together to improve school attendance'. Updated in February 2024.

To ensure that every child attends, on time, every day possible so that they:

- Establish positive routines and attitudes towards their education from the earliest point
- Progress well academically and socially.
- Develop excellent habits for their next steps in education and their careers.
- Promote and support the safety and welfare of all pupils

Aims

The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust (BWCAT) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective whole Trust strategy with regards to attendance and punctuality.

The DfE Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024 guidelines state that attendance "is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. 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."

BWCAT is committed to supporting the excellent attendance of all pupils.

Each academy within BWCAT will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Publish and adhere to this attendance policy, and ensure all staff, pupils and parents are aware of this policy.

- Accurately complete admission and, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools and Trusts in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Will take appropriate action in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities with respect to Attendance and understand the correlation with safeguarding.

All schools within BWCAT aim to:

- Maintain a high level of attendance.
- Reduce to a minimum the number of authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Reduce to a minimum the number of pupils who are persistently absent.
- Ensure attendance procedures are effectively and consistently applied.
- Ensure safeguarding procedures are effectively and consistently applied.

BWCAT will work in partnership with parents/carers in promoting and encouraging 100 percent attendance and punctuality for all our pupils.

Legal duty

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive full time education (the Education Act 1996). Legal action may be instigated against parents/carers whose child's attendance is at an unacceptably low level and where parents/carers are failing to fulfil their responsibility (section 444(1) and 1(a)).

In delivering this policy, we consider our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

We must keep an admission register (the academy roll) in accordance with section 7 of the guidance. This must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the academy along with the date of admission or re-admission to the academy, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended.

In accordance with section 7 of the Working Together guidance; we recognise that a pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in

regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, as amended, applies.

Each academy is required to maintain an accurate register as a legal document on a session by-session basis.

We must take the attendance register at the start of each morning session of each academy day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion we must record whether every pupil is

- present,
- attending an approved educational activity,
- absent,
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Our academies must preserve every entry in their attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry.

Our academies code attendance in accordance with 'Attendance and absence codes' as set out in the DfE guidance **(see appendix 2)**

Registers are only amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it was taken and it was subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, our academies must ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, and the date on which the amendment was made.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact the academy on the first and each subsequent day of absence unless a definite date of return is known. The academy will reach a decision whether the absence is authorised or not.

The academy will seek legal action through the local authority for continued poor attendance in accordance with the clear guidance and expectations as laid out in section 6 of the 2024 DfE guidance, and as part of their wider safeguarding duty outlined in KCSIE. This could result in a fixed penalty notice (FPN), or other sanctions being issued.

Within five school days of absence depending on the circumstances of the absence a member of staff **may** carry out a home visit.

The academy may request medical evidence for an absence. We accept appointment card, letters, emails, text messages and doctors' letters.

Key Information for **(insert school name) Insert school details in xxx**

The school day starts at xxxx and ends at xxxx

All absences should be reported by parents before xxx by following the school's absence reporting procedures. Details of how to do this can be found on the school's website (website address to be inserted here).

The school will always prioritise support over legal interventions. However, the school has a duty of care to inform parents that do not respond to the advice and support offered that the threshold for a referral to the local authority may be made.

The Senior Leader responsible for championing attendance is xxxx and they can be contacted by email: xxxxx, to discuss any absence concerns

SECTION B

Roles and Responsibilities

Directors of the Trust Board:

- The Directors of the Trust Board have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory or Trust framework.
- Monitor progress in attendance indicators and practice to ensure these are embedded across the organisation.
- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction in attendance management.
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils.
- Take steps to ensure the quality of education provision by overseeing standards and outcomes in attendance indicators across all academies within the Trust.
- The Directors have delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to, the CEO and the Headteacher of each academy.

Academy Council:

- The Academy Council have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy.
- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their academy to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction in attendance management.
- Support academy leaders to drive improvements in attendance and ensure all pupils are receiving the quality of education through positive attendance, enabling them to be the best they can.
- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
- Review the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy in light of the school's termly reports.

CEO and Central Team:

- Devise and review the Trust Attendance Policy, in consultation with Senior Leaders across the Trust.
- Set and review the Trust level targets for attendance and punctuality, strategic plan and target setting process.
- Maintain an overview of attendance and punctuality across all academies providing targeted support and guidance where need is identified.
- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of National statutory requirements, ensuring that we are fully compliant across the Trust.
- Provide accurate and evaluative reports to the Trust Board.

Headteacher:

- Ensure the school ethos promotes and celebrates good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure strategies are in place to promote and implement the Attendance policy throughout the school.
- Ensures all children access their full entitlement to high quality education.
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance – ensuring compliance with the most recent and up to date Keeping children Safe in Education (KCSiE).
- Developing appropriate support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), pupils with a social worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals and Gypsy, Roma Traveller (GRT) pupils.
- Develops and maintains a positive culture across the academy where all staff understand the link between behaviour, attendance, and inclusion.
- Monitor the school's offer to ensure the delivery of a curriculum which is engaging and personalised to the needs of the pupils.
- Monitor data on attendance and punctuality via reports from the senior leader responsible for attendance.
- Determine, in collaboration with the senior leader responsible for attendance, whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the academies official request form.
- Provide the Academy Council with termly reviews on attendance and punctuality, including data about pupils who are persistently absent (90% or below) or severely absent (50% or below). If attendance is highlighted through these reviews as an area to be monitored, it is recommended that a Governor from the Academy Council is appointed as Lead Governor for attendance, to meet the Headteacher or delegated senior leader and discuss the analysis of the data.
- Provide CEO/Executive Headteacher with termly reviews
- Set attendance targets during the appraisal process for the link senior leader, heads of year or other relevant members of staff directly associated with attendance performance measures, where appropriate.

- Ensures parents are fully informed of the academy expectations and requirements, through open and honest communication with staff, pupils, and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.

Senior Leader responsible for attendance:

- Lead initiatives to promote the profile of attendance throughout the school including a package of rewards that is valued by pupils.
- With the support of the pastoral team (secondary) Headteacher (primary), interrogate and analyse data on attendance and punctuality on a weekly, half-termly, and termly basis and prepare reports, as required, for the pastoral team, senior leadership team and Academy Council.
- Oversight of data analysis -
    - Monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues. This includes, communicating with families in the first instance, following up concerns with formal letters, raising concerns with other agencies like children's social care and early help services which are working with families.
    - Robust school systems are in place which provide useful data at cohort, group, and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups such as:
        - children who have a social worker including looked-after children
        - young carers
        - children who are eligible for free school meals
        - children who speak English as a second language
        - children who have special educational needs and disabilities
        - children who are GRT and travel for work reasons
- Oversee the arrangements for pastoral / attendance review meetings and quality assure the action plans devised.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable. Where a young person has a social worker and does not attend school, contact must be made with the social worker to report the absence and recorded on school systems that the social worker has been informed.
- Ensuring a positive working relationship with the Local Authority School Attendance Service is fostered, including attending Attendance Targeted Support Meetings.
- Provide training for all staff to make an active contribution to improving attendance aligned to their role and responsibilities (e.g. whole school staff briefing).
- Comply with the Department for Education Statutory Guidance on children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/ or repeated occasions (KCSiE) by informing the local authority of the details of children who are regularly absent,

missing from school following a leave of absence and prior to removing a child from the roll of the school.
- Senior Leaders analyse and discuss attendance with all Class Teachers/ Heads of year's half termly.
- Comply with the requirements of a school for consideration of legal action by the Local Authority when requesting a legal intervention.

Attendance officer/Administrator: (Within BWCAT Primary schools the Headteacher will have overall responsibility and delegate to staff when required)

- Monitor attendance on daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis, contacting parents/carers of pupils who have been identified as at-risk, to challenge absences and encourage an early return to school.
- Ensure data on attendance and punctuality is displayed in prominent places visible to pupils.
- Where appropriate, visit the home and/or make a referral to the local authority's education attendance team. Undertaking home visits in line with school's safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Discuss appropriate support for pupils for whom attendance and punctuality is a cause for concern.
- Manage the arrangements for pupils who need to attend appointments during school time.
- Work with the senior leader responsible for attendance to maintain an up-to-date attendance risk register and punctuality risk register of high-risk pupils in designated year groups.
- Lead or support pastoral / attendance review meetings and develop an action plan involving the child, parent/carer and, where appropriate, other agencies for pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality falls below the expected level.
- Co-ordinate the support plan for pupils returning to school after a prolonged absence.
- Co-ordinate the collation of all the documentary evidence required by the local authority for pursuing a legal intervention.
- Monitor registration on a daily basis and ensure any missing marks are quickly resolved to ensure pupils are safe.
- Be the first point of contact for parents/carers and relevant school staff regarding pupil absence and appointments.
- Collate and issue attendance and punctuality data on a daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis to the attendance officer/head of year and senior leader responsible for attendance.
- Maintain a record of all applications for leave of absence during term time and requests for issuing a penalty notice.

Form tutors/class teachers responsible for registering morning and afternoon sessions:

- Provide regular advice, encouragement, challenge and support to the class as a whole and individually to pupils about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality using the data provided by the administrative team.
- Ensure that the statutory attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of the school day and once during the second session. In secondary settings, for the purposes of safeguarding, registers should be taken at the beginning of each lesson.
- Ensure pupils' absence notes or verbal messages related to attendance and punctuality are provided to the administration team/pastoral team.
- Be alert and deal with any signs of disaffection which could result in poor attendance and punctuality and impact on learning and ensure this is recorded on the school management information system.
- Identify absence trends or concerns and raise with the relevant member of administration team/pastoral team staff.

Parents/carers:

- Be aware that it is an offence for their child to be absent from school without a valid reason.
- Be aware that only the school can determine if an absence from school is 'authorised'.
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time, dressed in school uniform, ready and equipped to learn.
- Inform the school if their child is unable to attend, including the reason for absence and the expected date of return.
- Ensure that all appointments, where possible, are arranged after school.
- Avoid arranging holidays/leave during term time except in exceptional circumstances.
- Ensure that all requests for leave during term time are made by completing the 'Leave of Absence During Term Time Request Form' **(see Appendix 1)** where possible at least one month in advance.
- Be aware that for unauthorised absences, the academy reserves the right to apply to the local authority to issue a penalty notice (fine).
- Work with the school and other partner organisations such as the LA to establish a shared understanding of perceived barriers to attendance, with a view to supporting their child to maintain full-time attendance at school.
- Keep in touch with the school and be open in communicating information that will help improve the quality and nature of support being provided.
- Ensure their child participates in all support programmes agreed by the academy.

Pupils:

- Aim to achieve 100% attendance and punctuality by arriving to school on time every day.
- Come to school well prepared and with the right attitude; to enjoy and achieve.

- Be proud of achieving excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Be punctual to all lessons.
- Ensure they are registered for all timetabled lessons and inform the relevant member of staff if they are not able to be registered.
- Ensure all notes/appointment cards are passed to the relevant member of staff.
- Speak to the appropriate member of staff if there are any problems that may affect attendance, punctuality and/or learning.

SECTION C

Authorised and Unauthorised absences

We follow the guidance on persistent and severe absence as outlined in section 5 of Working Together. Authorised absence is where the academy accepts there is good reason for an absence.

Consideration for an authorised absence requires a written, or telephone communication, from the parent. Parents are asked to notify the academy as soon as possible. Children who return to school following an absence without an explanation will be deemed to have had an 'unauthorised absence' until a suitable explanation has been given. Absence is then coded according to the cause **(Appendix 2)**.

Examples of absence that might be authorised are:

- An absence caused by genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.
- An absence for an agreed religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.
- Family bereavement.
- Situations where the academy authorises absence, e.g., study leave, work experience, interviews, and special occasions such as theatre/sporting/musical performance.
- Medical appointments where proof is available.
- Suspension or Permanent Exclusion.

Where explanations are not forthcoming, the explanations are deemed unacceptable, or unreliable; these will be explored by the academy and, where appropriate recorded as 'unauthorised'.

Examples might include:

- shopping
- no school uniform to wear
- to do homework / coursework
- lateness
- holidays
- day trips

- birthdays

If an absence is deemed as unauthorised this may result in the issuing of a penalty notice (FPN) or other legal interventions outlined in section 6 of 'Working together to improve school attendance 2024', including attendance contracts, education supervision orders and parenting orders.

We recognise that attendance below 90% is poor and a child below this figure is treated as a Persistent Absentee (PA) by all academies and the DfE (Department for Education).

SECTION D

Severe absence

Focused monitoring and intervention will be given to pupils who are absent from our academies for more time than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school).

These are classed as severely absent pupils. We recognise that these children 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. Our academy attendance teams will make this group a top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance for the pupil or a whole family plan.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the educational support have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, we recognise that it is likely to constitute neglect and would therefore be treated as a safeguarding issue.

In all cases, we expect our academies to make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of their regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible.

Family Holidays

Parents/carers are not entitled to remove children from our academies for holidays during term time. Where parents consider that there may be exceptional circumstances, this should be submitted in writing, outlining the circumstances, to the Headteacher of the academy prior to booking to seek authorisation.

We do not authorise holiday absences unless the request meets the exceptional circumstances outlined below, the exceptional circumstances will only be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher.

These exceptional circumstances are:

- where families are service personnel.
- other compassionate circumstances that can be confidentially shared with the academy.

The application letter must outline precisely what the exceptional circumstances are.

If you take your child on holiday during term time you may be liable for a penalty notice being issued with or without prior notice by parents/carers.

SECTION E

Addressing attendance and punctuality concerns

Through working closely in partnership with parents/carers, we aim to establish positive routines for attendance and punctuality from the earliest age. Due to the established impact of lost education on progress and achievement, we will always provide comprehensive support to children and families to endeavour to overcome barriers, but we have a robust response where concerns emerge. These are set out in the bullet points and the BWCAT Attendance Interventions below.

It is important that children arrive at school on time to avoid missing key learning, information and the impact on routines and relationships. Considering all the above, and in circumstances where it is justified, failure to co-operate with an outside agency could lead to the Local Authority prosecuting parents of children with poor attendance.

Procedure for Tracking and Improving Attendance

Each academy will have a robust day to day processes in place to track and follow up absence and poor punctuality. The attendance officer or administrator is responsible for tracking school attendance daily, weekly, half termly, and yearly. The Headteacher provides half termly reports to the Academy Council.

The attendance officer/administrator also provides an attendance report in which they outline the work the academy has been doing with families and the impact this has had. If a child's attendance becomes erratic or falls below 90% a referral may be made to relevant agencies. The CEO collects half termly attendance figures and will report to the Trust Board.

The school has robust procedures in place for reducing persistent and severe absence. The Academy will support families and offer internal support as well as make external referrals to agencies, in conjunction with parents e.g., School Nursing, Early Help Hub to remove

barriers to attendance and provide the necessary support to ensure their child attends school every day.

- Send a 'Priority 1- Attendance Communication' communication which informs parents that their child's attendance has fallen below 90% (minimum national school attendance level) and is being closely monitored to ensure they do not become a persistent absentee.

- Send a 'Priority 2 - Attendance Communication (Advice)' communication which informs parents that their child's attendance has shown no improvement since the last half term or is consistently causing concern, after being closely monitored. The academy to monitor the pupil's attendance for the next 10 school days.

- Send a 'Priority 3 – Attendance Communication (Support) communication which informs parents that their child's attendance has shown no improvement following the 10-day monitoring period. The academy to arrange a focus meeting and a plan put in place to support the pupil and their family to remove barriers and access support to improve attendance and punctuality. The academy to monitor this support plan for the next 10 school days.

- Send a 'Priority 4 – Attendance Communication (Warning) communication which informs parents that their child's attendance has shown no improvement following the implementation of the support plan and the 10-day monitoring. The academy to monitor the pupil's attendance for the next 10 school days. The warning letter must inform parents that if attendance does not improve a formal 'Attendance Panel Meeting' will be held.

- Send a 'Priority 5 – Attendance Communication (Formal Attendance Panel Meeting) communication which informs parents that an attendance panel meeting will be held. It is the responsibility of the academy to form the attendance panel meeting, a member of SLT/Executive Headteacher must chair the meeting. Attendees to include parents, the pupil (if appropriate) and other agencies involved. At the start of the meeting parents MUST be informed that the meeting is part of a formal attendance procedure which could lead to legal intervention by the Local Authority. Support plan formulated in the meeting, if actions signed and agreed this is an attendance contract. Academy to monitor for 10 school days, if no improvement or engagement then the academy will contact the Local Authority for consideration of statutory intervention by the Local Authority.

- Send a 'Priority 6 – Attendance Communication (Sanction – PACE Formal Meeting) communication which informs parents that their child's attendance has shown no improvement following the implementation of the formal support plan. The academy to liaise with the Local Authority to enforce statutory intervention, which

may include prosecution, Fixed Penalty Notices or other sanctions. Safeguarding concerns to be reported to Children Social Care.

Academies to retain clear records of interventions and support put in place during the first five stages detailed above. This documentation will be required as evidence at a PACE meeting. Documents from the formal attendance panel meeting must always clearly indicate the possibility of legal action being pursued against parents as an outcome.

BWCAT Attendance Interventions

Successfully treating the root cause of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families.

Xxxxx (insert school name) will collaboratively address the causes to remove barriers with partners and families by doing the following:

EXPECT

High, and improving, attendance within a culture where pupils want to be in school.

General communication of expectations and the impact of poor attendance.

Incentivise attendance; rewards and praise to promote the benefit of high, and/or improving attendance.

ATTENDANCE COMMUNICATION TO PARENTS **(EXPECT)**

WEEKLEY ATTENDANCE OFFICER DATA

LINK AND FOCAL MEETINGS AGENDA

MONITOR

PRIORITY GROUP 1

Identify patterns in data for individuals and groups to resolve concerns at the earliest possible point.

Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends to deliver targeted interventions.

Identify individual pupil, cohort and group attendance and punctuality concerns.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN STUDENT PROGRESS LEADERS; KEY STAGE DIRECTORS, SAFEGUARDING, CLASS TEACHERS.

ATTENDANCE COMMUNICATION ONE **(MONITOR)**

10 DAY MONITORING

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

PRIORITY GROUP 2

Discuss barriers to attendance and agree how to work together to resolve them with additional support.

Build positive relationships between home and school addressing concerns with dignity and respect.

ATTENDANCE COMMUNICATION TWO **(ADVICE)**

10 DAY MONITORING

FACILITATE SUPPORT

PRIORITY GROUP 3

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents access support.

Focus groups to support individual pupil, cohort and group attendance and punctuality

ATTENDANCE COMMUNICATION THREE **(SUPPORT)**

10 DAY MONITORING

WARNING

PRIORITY GROUP 4

The warning letter must inform parents that if attendance does not improve a formal 'Attendance Panel Meeting' will be held.

ATTENDANCE COMMUNICATION FOUR **(WARNING)**

10 DAY MONITORING

FORMAL ATTENDANCE PANEL MEETING

PRIORITY GROUP 5

Communication which informs parents that an attendance panel meeting will be held.

Support plan formulated in the meeting if actions signed and agreed this is an attendance contract.

ATTENDANCE COMMUNICATION FIVE **(FORMAL)**

10 DAY MONITORING

PACE FORMAL MEETING

PRIORITY GROUP 6

The academy will liaise with the Local Authority to enforce statutory intervention, setting out clearly when and how attendance legal intervention will be used.

Enforcement through statutory intervention, prosecution, Fixed Penalty Notices or other sanctions.

Safeguarding concerns referred to Education Safeguarding team for s.17 or s.47 involvement.

ATTENDANCE COMMUNICATION SIX **(SANCTION)**

Day to Day (including unexplained absences and Child Missing Education):

- Make an initial response (ranging from: text message, telephone call and/or home visit) on the first day of absence. When a home visit is made, a calling card will be left to make the parents aware a member of staff has visited their house.
- The academy will endeavour to make all reasonable enquires to ascertain the whereabouts of the child and the reason for absence, as above. If the academy fails to make any contact with the parents, a member of staff may conduct home visits, contact the Police or Children's Social Care to complete a safe and well check.
- In exceptional circumstances, where concerns are raised, a referral to Children's Social Care may also take place.

Weekly:

- Analysis of all absence and attendance codes for monitoring purposes.

- Analysis of the Late Log detailing all late children. (Both before and after registration closes).
- Phone calls and/or meetings, as required, to discuss individual circumstances, including lateness and/or absence.

Half-termly

- Meetings to discuss pupils' attendance.
- Attendance data is reported to the CEO and the Executive Headteacher for analysis, the CEO will present reports to the Trust Board for review.
- Attendance data is reported to the Academy Council (summary of statistics analysed for monitoring, assessing targets and implementing improvement), covering:

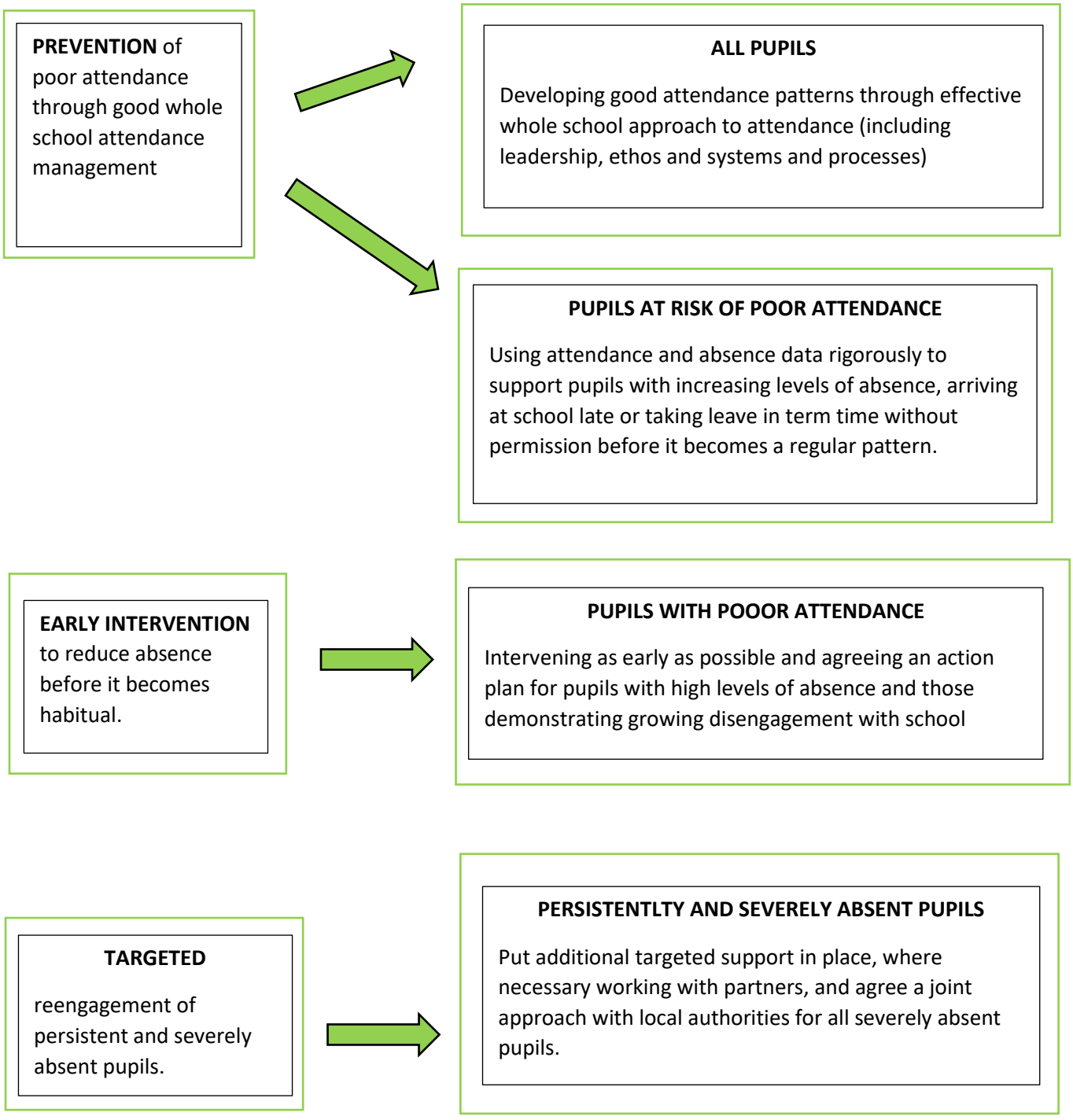
    - Whole school attendance
    - Age related attendance (year group)
    - Persistent absenteeism
    - Analysis of groups of learners e.g., SEND

Yearly:

- During various points throughout the year, school attendance is reported through the School Census.
- Attendance data is reported to the CEO and Trust Board for analysis.
- Attendance is reported to all parents within their 'End of Year Report'.
- A Yearly Attendance Summary is reported to the Academy Council (summary of statistics analysed for monitoring, assessing targets and implementing improvement), covering:

    - Whole school attendance
    - Age related attendance (year group)
    - Persistent absenteeism
    - Analysis of groups of learners e.g., SEND

Effective School Attendance Improvement and Management



DfE Guidance - Working together to improve school attendance.

SECTION F

Rewards and recognition

We recognise the importance of acknowledging and celebrating good attendance however we also do not penalise children who have been unable to attend due to medical conditions, illness, or other exceptional circumstances. We also value where attendance has shown sustained improvement over time.

Individual attendance targets and rewards are agreed for some children working with designated staff in the respective academy.
Special recognition is usually given to good attendance, individually, in class, year group or whole academy assemblies.

Part-time timetables

We recognise that in very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.

This will usually be because of an outcome of a SEND review, PEP review in the case of a Looked After Child, a Team Around the Child (TAC) or Early Help Assessment (EHA), and only when other options have been explored.

Statutory Guidance on the use of part-time timetable and exclusions is very clear:

"In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual need. For example, where a medical condition (including a mental health condition) prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a reintegration package. A part-time timetable must not be a long-term solution.
Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time-limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision."

We recognise that a pupil should not be put on a part-time timetable purely because of their special educational need as this may constitute discrimination.

Part-time timetables will only be used in very limited circumstances for pupils not able to attend school on a full-time basis, for example:

- Where there may be behaviour difficulties or a safeguarding concern or a pastoral support plan (PSP) in place, an interim part-time timetable may be considered by the academy.
- Where a pupil has a short-term medical condition that prevents full time attendance for a time limited period.

It does not refer to pupils whose curriculum has been modified but are still attending.

Part-time timetables are used to enable our academy leaders to address pupils' social emotional mental health needs with the goal of reintroducing them to full time learning. They are only in place for the shortest time necessary and must not be treated as a long-term solution. A clear time scale should therefore be identified on the plan. We work towards full re-integration at the earliest opportunity – depending on the circumstances and at the professional judgement of the Headteacher, this may be done incrementally by increasing the contact over time.

Objectives of a part-time timetable should be clearly understood and **agreed** from the outset by all stakeholders and reviewed at least fortnightly in partnership with parents and pupils. A parent/carer must consent to the part-time timetable and be clear that they are taking responsibility for the child when they are not in school.

When considering or implementing an interim part-time timetable we take into consideration the wider safeguarding implications for the child.

We ensure that a pupil absent, under these conditions, has their absence recorded as authorised.

Children who cannot attend school because of health needs

The Government's policy intention is that all children, regardless of circumstance or setting should receive a good education to enable them to shape their own futures. Therefore, alternative provision and the framework surrounding it should offer good quality education on par with that of mainstream schooling, along with the support pupils need to overcome barriers to attainment.

This support should meet a pupil's individual needs, including social and emotional needs, and enable them to thrive and prosper in the education system.
The Government has issued statutory guidance which Local Authorities (LAs) must have regard to when carrying out their duty to arrange suitable full-time education (or part-time when appropriate for the child's needs) for children who are unable to attend a mainstream school because of their health. This duty applies to all children and young people who would normally attend mainstream schools, including academies, free schools, independent schools and special schools, or where a child is not on the roll of a school. It applies equally whether a child cannot attend school at all or can only attend intermittently.

LAs are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils from the 6th day, and for other children who – because of illness or other reasons –

would not receive suitable education without such provision. This means that where a child cannot attend school because of health problems, and would not otherwise receive a suitable full-time education, the LA is responsible for arranging provision and must have regard to this guidance.

There will be a wide range of circumstances where a child has a health need but will receive suitable education that meets their needs without the intervention of the LA – for example, where the child can still attend school with some support; where the school has made arrangements to deliver suitable education outside of school for the child; or where arrangements have been made for the child to be educated in a hospital by an on-site hospital school.

The Government would not expect the LA to become involved in such arrangements unless it had reason to think that the education being provided to the child was not suitable or, while otherwise suitable, was not full-time or for the number of hours the child could benefit from without adversely affecting their health. This might be the case where, for example, the child can attend school but only intermittently.

Further information for families can be found in the BWCAT Supporting Pupils with Health Needs who cannot Attend School.

Pupils absent from school due to Mental Health or their Special Educational Needs or Disabilities.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations, or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly. In many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.

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

Each Academy will consider:

- Understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family.
- Working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place and working with the Local Authority and other agencies where external support is needed.

- Regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs.

For pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, each academy will:

- Work in partnership with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance, including where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- Work in partnership with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed. Work with outside agencies to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers SEND pupils may face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, and access to support in school.
- Consider adjustments to processes and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where pupils have a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate.

Where a pupil's health need means they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, schools can seek medical evidence to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision in line with the statutory guidance in supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.

If parents do not engage in the support provided, academies will work with the Local Authority or other local partners to formalise the support and as a last resort, enforce attendance through legal intervention.

Academy's will ensure data is regularly monitored for pupils with long term illnesses and or special educational needs or disabilities. Data will be reported to the trust Board and Academy Councils. Academies will also share data within target support meetings with the Local Authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.

Re-integration of pupils following long term absence

Each academy recognises the key role it can play in ensuring the successful reintegration of pupils returning after a prolonged period of absence.

The academy will work in partnership with parents/carers and external agencies (if appropriate), to assist a smooth reintegration back into school ensuring a flexible approach to meeting the pupil's needs.

All relevant staff will be informed of the child's circumstances, where necessary and a member of staff will be nominated to oversee the pupil's return.

The pupil's peers will also be included to ensure they welcome the pupil back to school and support the reintegration process.

Children Missing in Education (CME)

Children Missing in Education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not on a school/academy roll and who are not receiving a suitable alternative education (for example at home). These children may be at a greater risk of harm. The Local Authority's Education Welfare Service is responsible for monitoring and tracking young people who are not in the education system, and for supporting their entry into a school/academy.

A child going missing from education, which includes within the school day, is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation. Unauthorised absences will be monitored and followed up in line with the academy's attendance procedures, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions. All staff are aware of the signs of risk and individual triggers including travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

All pupils will be placed and removed from admission and attendance registers as required by law.

The academy will collect at least two emergency contact numbers for each pupil. The academy will inform the local authority of any child removed from the academy's admission register. The academy will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend for a continuous period in line with the local authority's procedures.

If a child goes missing from education the academy has a responsibility to make reasonable enquiries to find the child. If they are unable to do so they should refer to the Local Authority's CME Officer in the Education Welfare Service.

Including day to day attendance procedures, as well as cases of CME, the academy will:

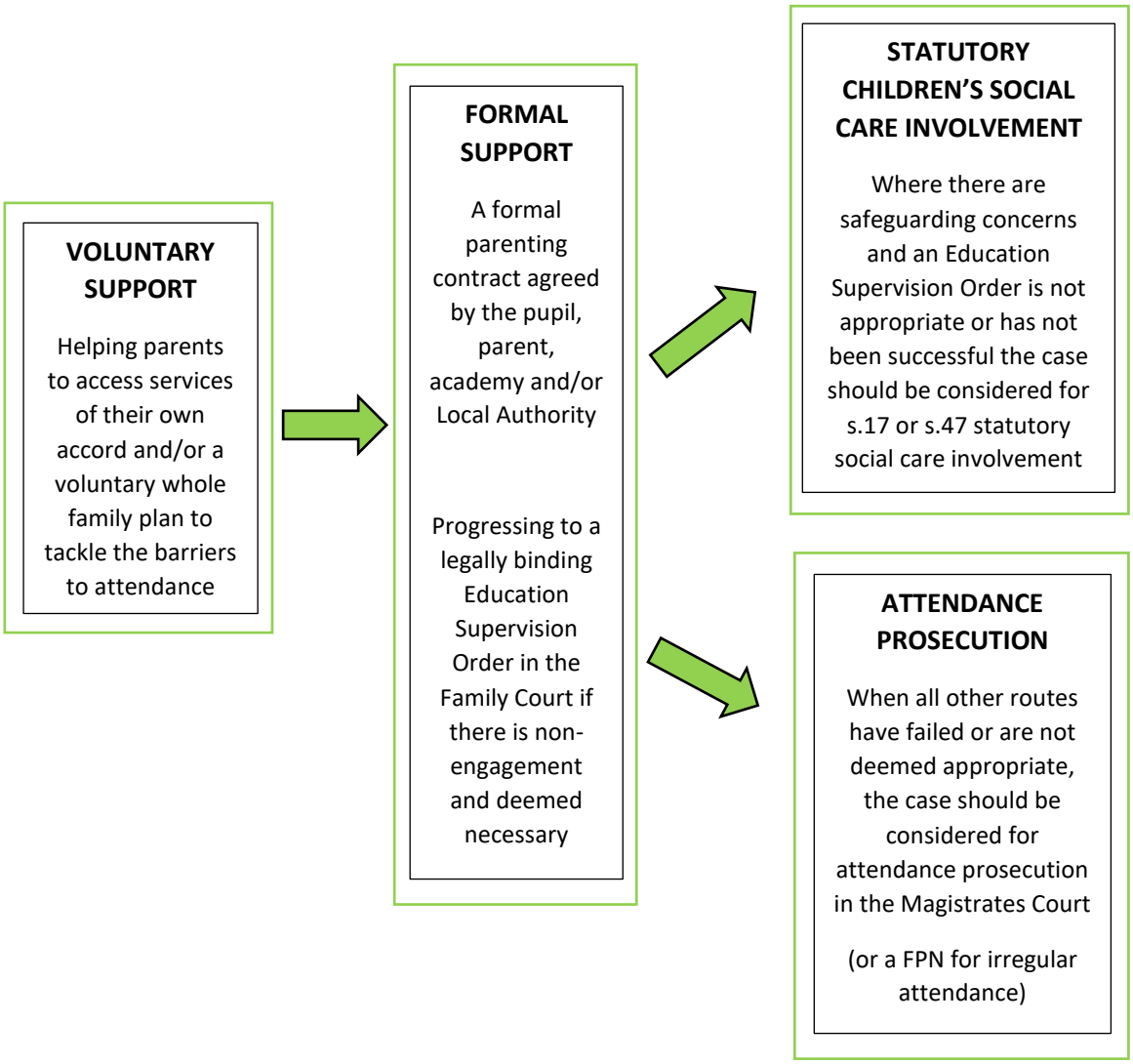
- Make an initial response (ranging from: text message, telephone call and may conduct a home visit) on the first day of absence. When a home visit is made, a calling card will be left to make the parents aware a member of staff has visited their house.
- Endeavour to make all reasonable enquires to ascertain the whereabouts of the child and the reason for absence, as above. If the academy fails to make any contact with the parents, a member of staff may telephone Children's Social Care or the Police to complete a safe and well check.
- In exceptional circumstances, where concerns are raised, a referral to Children's Social Care may also take place.
- Inform the local authority if any child is absent for 10 consecutive school days and no reasonable explanation has been provided.

- Inform the local authority of any child removed from the academy's admission register. Schools must follow their Local Authority guidance for CME and also the DfE 'Children Missing in Education' guidance 2016

SECTION G

Legal Interventions

As absence is often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, the Trust and its academies will work together with the Local Authority to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupil's right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.



DfE Guidance - Working together to improve school attendance.

The academy, via the local authority, may exercise its legal powers to address poor attendance in school. These powers include:

Penalty Notices: Education (England) Regulations 2007 allows penalty notices (fines) to be issued to parents/carers. They are an alternative measure to the prosecution of parents/carers who fail to ensure that their child attends school. Penalty notices can only be issued by a Headteacher, or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant Headteacher), 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 the Local Authority, 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.

The penalty notice is issued to any adult with parental responsibility for each child. From Autumn 2024, 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 a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty 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.

A penalty notice must be issued in line with the National Framework and local code of conduct for the area in which the child goes to school, and if issued by the local authority, it must be the **School LA.**

Every Local Authority must draw up, and publish on their website, a Local Code of Conduct for issuing fixed penalty notices which must be adhered to by all schools, the police and any Local Authority issuing a penalty notice.

Further information on the National Framework and thresholds to be met to issue a penalty notice can be found in the updated 2024 statutory guidance ‘Working together to improve school attendance’.

Prosecution: If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly 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.

Local Authorities have the power to prosecute;

- Parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order issued by the Local Authority to require a parent to get their child registered at a named school (under section 443 of the Education Act 1996). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).
- Parents who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at 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 may 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 persistently fail to comply with directions under an Education Supervision Order (under Schedule 3 of the Children Act 1989) or breach a Parenting Order or directions under the order. These mat result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).

The decision to prosecute rests solely with the Local Authority as an independent prosecuting authority.

It should be the School LA that takes forward prosecutions under section 444(1) and (1A) of the Education Act 1996. However, the school LA should inform the home LA that legal action is being taken.

Education Supervision Order (ESO): ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, rather than the magistrates Court. They give the Local Authority a formal role in advising, helping, and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education.

The order initially lasts for one year, but extensions can be secured within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time. Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given in an ESO can lead to a fine of up to £1000.

With the School LA or the Home LA can apply for an education supervision order, but it will usually be the **Home LA** that acts as the 'designated LA'.

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

The order requires a parent to comply with the arrangements specified in the order by the Court which can include a requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance

sessions (e.g. parenting education or parenting support classes) where they will receive help and support to enable them to improve their child's attendance for up to 3 months. Any breach of the order could lead to a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).

The court will specify a responsible officer in line with section 372 (5) of the Sentencing Act 2020. Both the Home LA and School LA should discuss and agree who is most appropriate to act as the responsible officer in advance of seeking the order.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed by the CEO and Head of Governance in consultation with Headteachers and staff within the academies. The policy will be reviewed annually and approved by the Resources Committee on behalf of the Trust Board.

SECTION H

Appendix 1

Leave of Absence during term time (Form)

Each Academy to insert their form

Appendix 2

Codes for marking attendance and absence

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics through the School Census system. The data helps schools, local authorities and the government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reason for, absence and the delivery of education.

Category	Relevant Regulation	Code	Code Meaning
Present	**6(1)(a)(i)**	**/ **	**Present in school / = am \ = pm**
	6(1)(a)(i)	**L**	**Late arrival before the register is closed**
Absent			
Authorised Absence from School	**6(1)(ii), 6(1)(b), 6(2), 7(1) and 7(2)**	**C1**	**Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.**
		C2	**Leave of absence for compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable**
		C	**Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances**
		H	**leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday granted by the school**
		E	**Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made**

		I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
		M	Medical or dental appointment
		R	Religious observance
		S	Study leave for public examination
		T	Traveller absence
		K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Unauthorised Absence from School	6(1)(ii) and 6(3)	G	Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school
		N	Reason for absence not yet provided
		O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
		U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Attending another school at which the pupil is registered	6(1)(a)(iii) and 6(4)(b)	D	Dual registered at another school
Attending an educational activity that takes place outside the school	6(1)(iii), 6(1)(c) and 6(4)(a)	B	Attending any other approved educational Activity
		J1	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
		P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
		V	Educational visit or trip
		W	Work experience

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	**6(1)(iv), 6(1)(d), 6(5), 6(7) and 6(2)(b)(i)**	**Y**	**Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances**
		Y1	**Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available**
		Y2	**Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel**
		Y3	**Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed**
		Y4	**Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed**
		Y5	**Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention**
		Y6	**Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law**
		Y7	**Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause**
		Q	**Unable to attend due to a lack of access arrangements**
Administrative codes		**X**	**Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school**
		Z	**Prospective pupil not on admission register**
		#	**Planned whole closure**

DfE Guidance - Working together to improve school attendance.

The 16 schools in our Trust:

St. Mary's Menston, a Catholic Voluntary Academy

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Otley, a Voluntary Academy

Ss Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Ilkley, a Voluntary Academy

St Mary's Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Pudsey, a Voluntary Academy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Harrogate, a Voluntary Academy

St Mary's Catholic Primary School Knaresborough, a Voluntary Academy

St. Stephen's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, a Voluntary Academy

Holy Name Catholic Voluntary Academy

St Roberts Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

St John Fisher Catholic High School Harrogate, a Voluntary Academy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Tadcaster, a Voluntary Academy

Barkston Ash Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Barnoldswick, a Voluntary Academy

St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust

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