

THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM



TRUSTEES POLICY DOCUMENT 83

ATTENDANCE POLICY

**This whole policy will continue to be reviewed throughout the academic year
in line with statutory guidance**

Date reviewed by School	14/07/2026
Next review due:	Academic Year 2028 - 2029
Policy review cycle:	Every 3 Years
Policy Owner:	Deputy Headteacher (Senior Attendance Champion)

Vision Statement

'Together we aim high, discover talents, and build a brighter future'

Thomas Mills High School is an Academy and a company limited by guarantee
incorporated in England & Wales under number 7605059

We expect parents/carers to contact the school on the first day of absence, and every subsequent day of absence by 9.00 am or earlier.

Please email: attendance@thomasmills.suffolk.sch.uk

or phone: [01728 726677](tel:01728726677)

as soon as possible, with the name of child, form, and a brief reason for absence.

In the Sixth Form, emails can be sent to sixthform@thomasmills.suffolk.sch.uk

If you are concerned about your child's attendance, please contact your child's Form Tutor in the first instance.

Deputy Headteacher (Senior Attendance Champion): Miss L Armes
Strategic Overview of Attendance

The Importance of Attendance

Thomas Mills High School and Sixth Form is committed to providing the highest quality of education for all its students, recognising that this can only be achieved by promoting and supporting excellent school attendance. Only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational and social opportunities available to them. Therefore, the whole school community – students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff, and school trustees and governors – have a responsibility for promoting and ensuring excellent school attendance.

This policy outlines our approach, having been written and reviewed in conjunction with DfE school attendance guidance, statutory safeguarding guidance, and advice from Suffolk County Council's Education Attendance Service.

[Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026](#)

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[School attendance - Suffolk County Council](#)

Aims

- Promoting a welcoming school culture that encourages high levels of attendance and punctuality, where children feel safe, secure, and valued
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality on academic attainment, social emotional wellbeing, and wider outcomes
- To ensure that attendance is recorded and monitored consistently and thoroughly
- To work in partnership with students, parents and carers, staff and the Education Welfare Service to ensure that all pupils access full time education and realise their potential

The school will be responsible for ensuring that all members of the community are made aware of the policy and have access to it.

Students' Responsibilities

All students should be aware of the importance of attending school regularly. If they are having difficulties which might prevent this, they should speak to their Form Tutor in the first instance or another trusted adult staff member.

- Students should attend every day, arriving to all lessons punctually and ready to learn
- Students will be subject to school behaviour procedures if arriving late to registration or lessons
- If absent from school, students should check exam dates/coursework deadlines and catch up with any work missed

Parents'/Carers' Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 requires parents to ensure their children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and to any special educational needs they may have. **Where a child is registered at a school the parents are legally responsible for ensuring they attend school every day that they can.**

Attendance at school is vital for a child's ability to learn, develop and achieve. As a parent or carer of a child of school age, you should:

- send your child to school on time every day with the correct uniform and equipment

- contact the child's school on their first day of absence and any subsequent days of absence if they are unwell, and return them to school as soon as they are well enough
- as much as possible, arrange medical appointments outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents/carers will be expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance (e.g a GP appointment card/email, a consultant's letter etc.), and their child should attend school before/after the appointment;
- avoid booking holidays to take place during term time
- show your child, by your interest, that you value their education

Your child's absence is only acceptable for the following reasons:

- your child cannot attend school due to illness (for guidance, please see [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/when-to-call-the-gp/)). You may be required to provide medical evidence.
- your child cannot attend school due to significant injury or other unavoidable causes (e.g. family bereavement)
- your family is observing a time of religious importance and leave has been authorised by the school
- the local authority have failed in their duty to provide transport.

Pupils must attend school every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is the Headteacher, not the parent, who can authorise absence. Thomas Mills High School and Sixth Form encourages all parents and carers to work positively and constructively in partnership with us to improve attendance and punctuality where needed. If you are worried about your child's attendance, please contact your child's Form Tutor in the first instance.

School Responsibilities

All staff place a high value on students' regular attendance and punctuality, understanding the crucial role it plays in attainment, wellbeing, and wider outcomes. The school will ensure that staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example to students in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

School staff are responsible for ensuring that students have good attendance and punctuality by:

- Creating and sustaining an ethos in which excellent attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and are seen to be valued by the school and its community;
- Ensuring registers are completed accurately and on time, in accordance with the appropriate regulations (Appendices D and E). Persistent lateness is noted and reported to the Attendance team;
- Differentiating appropriately between what constitutes *authorised* and *unauthorised* absence; a parental note/message does not in itself authorise an absence – only the school (Attendance Officer, Head of Year, Attendance Champion or ultimately the Headteacher) can decide whether the explanation given justifies authorising an absence;
- Responding to absence and lateness firmly, consistently and with care, and as outlined in the Attendance Guidance structure (Appendix A) and the behaviour policy;
- The Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers every day when a child is absent from school and no reason has been received, with priority given to those with known vulnerabilities;

- As outlined in Appendix A, the Form Tutor, Head of Year, Attendance Officer and Senior Attendance Champion will contact parents when they are concerned about a student's absence or lateness, and keep records of that contact;
- The Senior Attendance Champion, in liaison with Heads of Year and the Attendance Officer, will consult with the Education Attendance Service (EAS) via regular meetings with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and at other times if a student's attendance continues to give cause for concern (as outlined in Appendix A);
- Promoting regular school attendance (for example, via the Attendance Officer contacting parents on the first day of absence if no contact has been made, and on subsequent days of absence);
- Acknowledging and celebrating excellent/good or improved attendance of individual students and classes;
- Monitoring student attendance in lessons, flagging any unexplained absences to the Attendance Officer via 'arbor on call alert', and following up any truancy/lateness during the day as per the behaviour policy;
- Working collaboratively to identify those students in need of interventions at an early stage, and putting support in place to deal with any difficulties;
- Meet regularly to review the attendance of students, implement appropriate interventions and issue relevant letters to parents;
- Ensuring the policy reviewed and updated regularly, with sufficient monitoring on successful implementation.

Day to Day Procedures (include contact details)

Morning Registration begins at 8.55 am and is taken in tutor bases. The register will be called by 9.00 am.

Afternoon registration will be called promptly at 2 pm.

Your child will be marked **LATE (code L)** if they arrive after the Form Tutor has finished calling the register, or if they do not arrive promptly to lessons. The minutes will be logged on ARBOR. Students who are absent in lessons without a reason (e.g. music lesson) will be raised with the Attendance Officer via a 'arbor on call alert' email within the first 10 minutes of each lesson. The school operates a 'pay back' system for the number of minutes you are late to a lesson or registration.

Your child should be marked **ABSENT (code U, unauthorised lateness)** if they arrive after 9.25 am in the morning, or 2.05 in the afternoon.

Students who arrive after 9.25 am, or cannot be registered by their tutor, must report to main reception to be signed in. Any student signing out during the day must also do this via the main reception.

The school recognises that, on rare occasions, buses/coaches may be delayed, and will adjust procedures accordingly.

TIP: Please arrange routine medical appointment for your child out of school hours. Where this is not possible, we recommend requesting a mid-morning appointment, as this will not impact your child's attendance record. We can see students striving for top attendance, and this will help with that goal.

Absence

We expect a parent/carer to contact the school on the first day of absence, and every subsequent day of absence, by 9.00 am or earlier.

Please email: attendance@thomasmills.suffolk.sch.uk

or phone: 01728 726677

as soon as possible, with the name of child, form, and a brief reason for absence.

Parents/carers who have not provided a reason for absence will be contacted by telephone and/or email every day of absence by the Attendance Officer and child's form tutor, even if on first contact the parent/carer states that it is unlikely that the student will return the following day. The only exception to this rule is when a student has been hospitalised. In these cases, a date for next contact of the school by the parent/carer or vice versa is agreed.

Illness/Medical Absence: in addition to the above, parents/carers should be aware that:

- if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school is likely to request medical evidence for further absences.
- an automatic request for medical evidence may be instigated if the authenticity of an illness is in doubt; for example, in cases of any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday.
- failure to provide documentation on request will result in an unauthorised absence mark being recorded.

Absence for Holidays and Requests for Leave of Absence:

- It is the expectation that parents/carers do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time to minimise the impact of missing education.
- Headteachers have the sole discretions to authorise absence. Leave in term time will not be agreed by us at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.
- Parents/carers requesting a holiday during term time must complete a Leave of Absence request form on the website/on paper (Appendix C, available in the school office) at least four weeks in advance of the intended trip. [Leave of Absence Form | Thomas Mills High School & Sixth Form](#) Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Senior Attendance Champion in liaison with the relevant Head of Year.
- If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the school's authorisation, the child's absence will be marked as unauthorised; this may then impact upon overall attendance with further action being necessary (Appendix A).

Absence for Other Reasons:

- It is the parent's/carer's responsibility:
 - To inform their child's Form Tutor, Head of Year and Attendance Officer in writing of the need for leave for circumstances which are known in advance;
 - To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden or unforeseen circumstances occur which prevent a child from attending school in order that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register, and suitable support offered if needed.

Unauthorised Absence:

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence is shown on reports and ultimately school references.

The Trustees have agreed to adopt the Government initiative of imposing Fixed Penalty Notices in cases of persistent unauthorised absence and lateness to registration:

- An immediate fixed penalty notice fine may be issued when ten or more unauthorised absence sessions have been recorded (amounting to 5 whole days in total) within any rolling 10 week period (see Appendix H);
- Fixed Penalty Notices are issued, on behalf of the School by Suffolk County Council, to the family home.

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- £160 per parent, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

For a second Penalty Notice for the same child within a 2-year period the fine is:

- £160 per parent.
- In circumstances where a Penalty Notice has been served with no impact or attendance patterns show exceptionally poor attendance the school may request a prosecution through Section 444(1) of the 1996 Education Act. This will result in prosecution through the courts if there is no improvement in attendance. Prosecution can result in Criminal records and fines of up to £2,500. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'. (see Appendix H)

Persistent Absenteeism and Severe Absenteeism

- A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and further action will be necessary. This includes parents/carers attending a meeting with members of the Pastoral Team directly involved with their child to discuss forms of support, possible referrals and potential EWO involvement (Appendix A and D). We need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve absence issues of this severity.
- A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as 'severely absent'. Pupils within this cohort 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 from a wider range of professionals and agencies.

School Strategy

- The aim of the school's Attendance Strategy is to encourage excellent attendance. By intervening at an early stage, the school aims to avoid the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer and potential legal proceedings.
- The school will celebrate good attendance by:
 - a. Certificates and prizes in end of term achievement assemblies
 - b. Recognising improved attendance
 - c. Letters home to parents

We are rightly proud of the numbers who achieve 100% attendance and encourage all pupils to aim for this. The importance of this will be emphasised through form tutors or termly assemblies and reports.

- The school implements a graduated response when addressing attendance. This is outlined in the school's Attendance Strategy document (Appendix A). The attendance team will meet regularly to monitor attendance, using ARBOR and DfE

VYED to aid analysis, and parents will receive notification when attendance has dropped through a significant threshold.

- Where students are struggling to improve attendance, the pastoral team aims to work closely with parents and pupils to support their right to access full time education. This includes looking at addressing any in-school barriers, and signposting/supporting access to any required services or outside agencies. Such agencies could include the Education Welfare Service, the School Nurse, GP, Children and Young People's Services, SEND services and the Virtual School.
- A referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance does not improve. In this case, parents will be invited to a meeting by letter.
- Staff are encouraged to take a 'curious, not furious' approach. The data admin team will circulate a spreadsheet by 10.30am every day listing students who are absent with reasons provided. The child's form tutor is expected to call home daily to explore barriers, reinforce positive relationships and sense of belonging. Details of contact will be recorded by the form tutor on Arbor. Where barriers and/or complications exist, form tutor (sometimes with Head of Year) will ask parent(s) and child to attend a meeting in school to offer additional support.

This policy will be reviewed annually but can be revised as needed. Governance will ensure this policy is implemented and commission external scrutiny to ensure its evaluation. Internally, the school will review the implementation of the policy through the regular monitoring of relevant data and work, where required, with external agencies including Educational Welfare.

Appendices

APPENDIX A – School offer

APPENDIX B – Absence in the Sixth Form

APPENDIX C – Request for leave form

APPENDIX D – EWO Fast Track Flow Chart

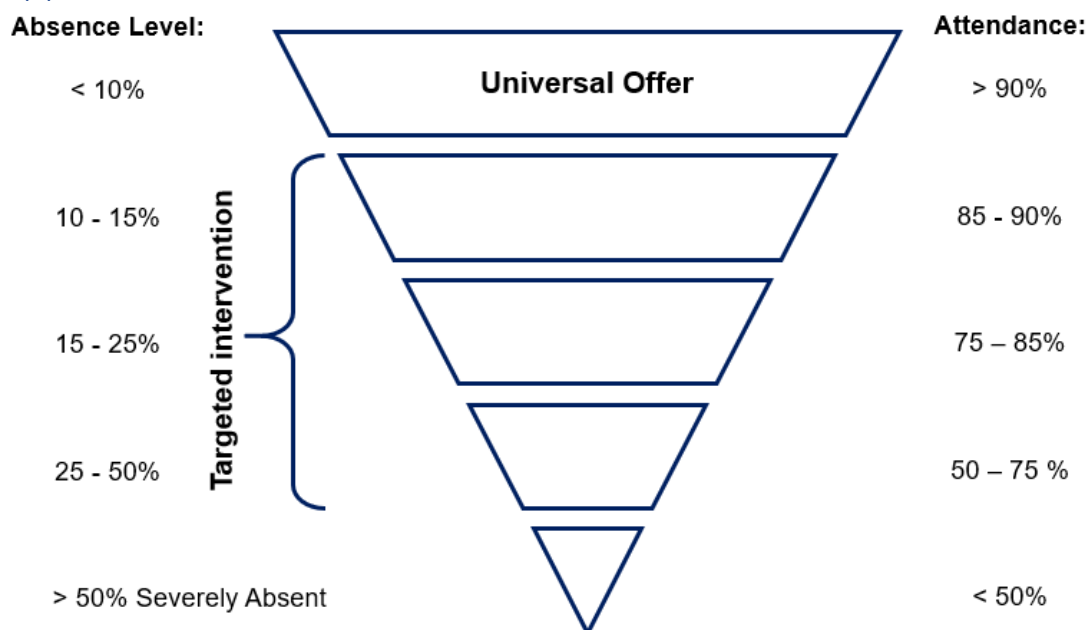
APPENDIX E – Attendance codes and definitions

APPENDIX F – Clear instructions on completing registers for staff

APPENDIX G - [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

APPENDIX H – Suffolk County Council: Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

Appendix A



Universal Offer will include:

- In school celebrations
- Letters home
- Proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent
- Early identification of trends and patterns
- Working with pupils and parents to understand and address reasons for absence
- Addressing in-school barriers to attendance and lateness
- Signposting and supporting access to any required services
- Attendance Contracts if necessary

This is completed by tutors, attendance officer, and the data admin team. HoY may be involved if appropriate when pupils are identified as at risk of becoming PA.

Targeted Interventions will include:

- All support available for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent
- Letters from EWO
- Attendance Contracts
- Meetings with tutors/HoY/attendance team to help target additional support at removing any barriers
- Working with external agencies
- Where there is a lack of engagement, Penalty Notices may be issued by Suffolk County Council on behalf of the school

This is completed by tutors, attendance officer, data admin team, HoY, Attendance Champion, DHT (pastoral) and EWO.

Severely absent pupils will require specialist intervention. This will be overseen by the DHT (Pastoral) and will be a joint approach with the local authority.

Appendix B

Absence in the Sixth Form

In the Sixth Form, akin to the lower school, consistent attendance is requisite as stipulated in the school's attendance policy. Nevertheless, it is essential to highlight additional expectations linked exclusively to the Sixth Form.

Reporting of Absence

We expect a parent/carer to contact the school on the first day of absence and every subsequent day of absence, by 9am or earlier.

This can be carried out by the following methods:

- Contact can be made via to school gateway
- An email sent to sixthform@thomasmills.suffolk.sch.uk

Home Study

We recognise that as students advance to the Upper Sixth (UVI), the development of independent study skills and routines is crucial for maximising their success at A level. A component of this development is the provision of opportunities to engage in home study during designated periods.

Students' timetables may include blocks of time without scheduled lessons. If the Sixth Form team is confident that a student will use this time productively at home, permission for home study will be granted.

Students may apply for **up to six home study sessions per week** with an agreement made between the student, their parent/carer and the Sixth Form team.

Driving Lessons

Students are permitted to schedule driving lessons during their study periods or lunchtime, as driving is recognised as an important skill. **Absences from scheduled lessons or supervised study sessions are not permitted.**

Driving lessons can be arranged through an agreement between the student, parent/carer, and the Sixth Form team, which requires obtaining the appropriate authorisation letter from the Sixth Form administration office.

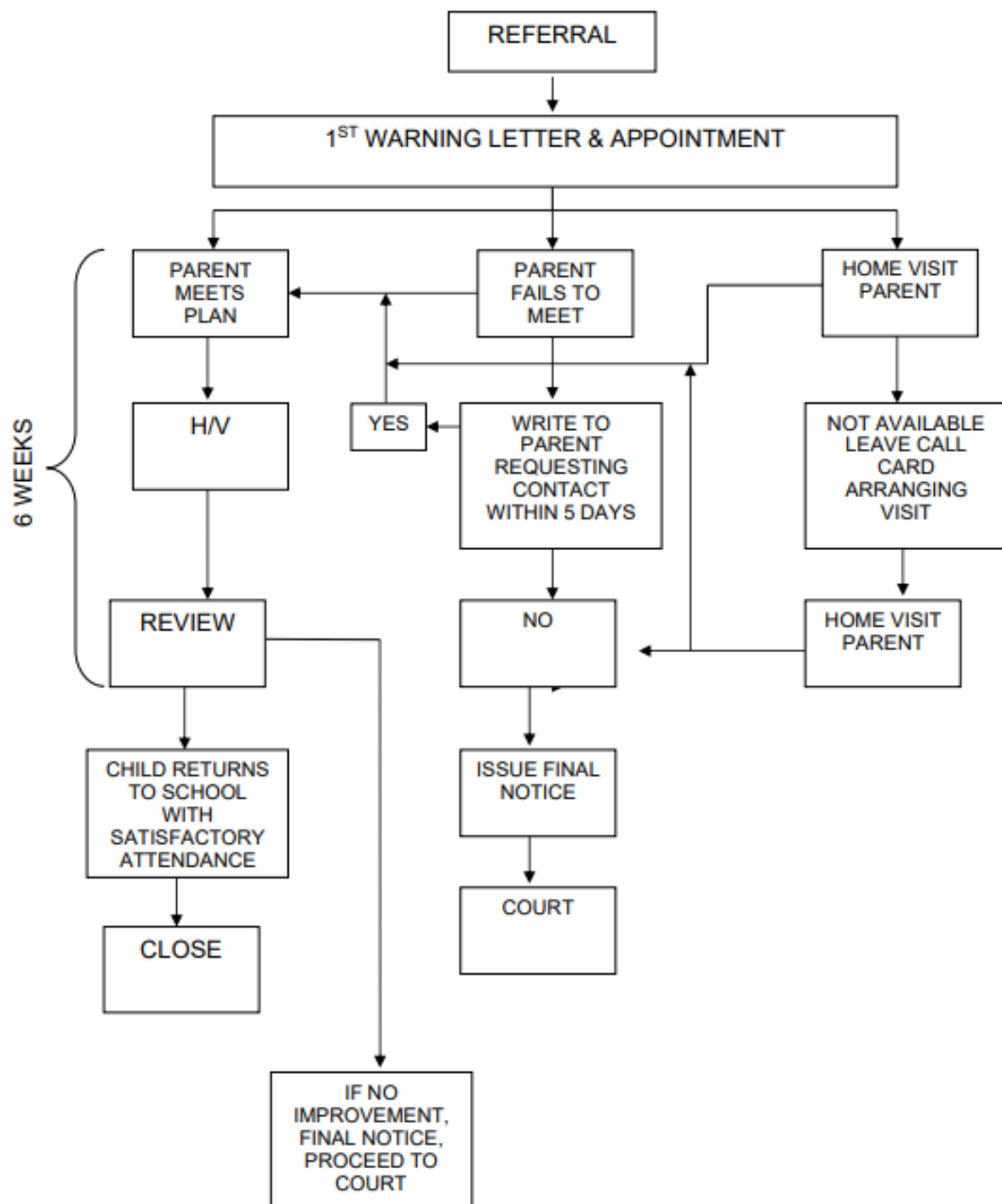
Work Experience

It is recognised that work experience can provide significant benefits for our students as they prepare for life beyond Sixth Form. Students are encouraged to seek out work experience in an area of interest during blocks of time on their timetable that do not contain scheduled lessons.

The completion of the pink work experience form, available from the Sixth Form administrative office, is required. This form should include:

- The name and contact information of the placement,
- Parent/Carer approval,
- Sixth Form Team approval

EWO Fast Track Flowchart



Appendix D

[Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026](#)

Code	Definition
Authorised Absences	
/ \	Present: / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late: Absent when the register has started being taken, but arrives before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
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
Unauthorised absences	
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

Appendix E

Guidance for staff on the completion of registers

The correct and accurate marking of the Attendance Register is very important, particularly with reference to safeguarding. From September 2019 registration has taken place in every lesson and this continues to be the case.

Just as safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, the same is true of attendance.

1. Registration should take place **at the beginning** of each morning and afternoon registration session and **at the beginning of every lesson** and recorded on computer via Arbor. There **must not be any blank marks**.

It is important that the register is completed **within the first 10 minutes** of registration session or lesson beginning.

2. **L = Late** The register stays open for the duration of morning registration which begins at 8.55am and concludes at 9.25am.
 - If pupils/students arrive after morning registration they must sign-in at Reception and the L-code will be inserted by the Administrative Officer (Attendance) with a note added explaining reasons.
 - Form Tutors should not use the L-code but should be aware of punctuality issues and address them with pupils/students and parents, informing their Head of Year.
3. **N = Absent.**
 - This should be used when a pupil/student is absent, and **no other code has already been inserted by the Attendance Officer in advance**. (For example, a pupil/student may already have an I-code or C-code if they are absent through illness or have an appointment).
4. Lesson registers **must** be completed and **saved** within the first **ten minutes** at the **start** of the session. Any pupils/students unaccounted for should be raised via Arbor Alert.
5. In the event that technical issues prevent any register being taken, a reliable pupil/student should be sent immediately to reception to request a paper copy to be completed & returned as soon as possible.
6. Staff must read this information in conjunction with the school's Attendance Policy & Attendance Toolkit.

All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.	Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand. Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on. Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.	Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed. Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.	Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.	Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence. Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met. If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.

Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care. Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders. Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and: Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and: All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are changing from 19th August 2024

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by DfE, the following changes will come into force for School Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence.

The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

Please note: The DfE 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.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.



Second Offence (within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.



Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in Criminal records and fines of up to £2,500

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Per Parent*, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent* for each child that was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

*Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" as:

- All natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.