St Wilfrid's Catholic School

Attendance Policy

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."
Gospel of Matthew 18:20

Date policy last reviewed:	November 2026
Next Review	September 2029

Reviewed by Forbes Solicitors

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Statement of intent

St Wilfrid's Catholic School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Students cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

The school understands that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some students find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, the school will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with students and parents.

The school takes a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognises the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, supporting students with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, pastoral support and wellbeing, support for young carers and children with a social worker, and the effective use of resources such as student premium – can have on improving student attendance.

The school is committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, students and parents.
- Intervening early and working with the LA and other relevant partners to understand and remove barriers to attendance and provide appropriate support.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents understand their legal responsibility to make sure their child receives an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have, and that, where their child is registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends regularly.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is Alice Tilbrook, and can be contacted via a.tilbrook@stwilfrids.com for day-to-day attendance queries and concerns. Students and parents who require more detailed support with attendance can contact Charlotte Rumbol Designated Safeguarding Lead via c.rumbol@stwilfrids.com

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Students) (England) Regulations) 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE 'Children missing education'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)'
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children'
- DfE 'Providing remote education: guidance for schools'
- DfE 'Sharing daily student attendance data'
- DfE 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Not being present at school for a session where the student is required to attend and the absence is recorded using an appropriate absence code.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.

Authorised absence:

C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age student not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as student is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other unavoidable cause (must affect the student NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absence	
G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	student not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of school sessions for any reason, equivalent to one day or more a fortnight across a full school year.

Missing education:

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

Severe absence

- Missing 50 percent or more of school sessions for any reason.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will have overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties including making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register and shares the required information with the DfE and LA.
- Ensuring the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate.
- Ensuring attendance training forms part of the school's continuing professional development offer for all staff, with dedicated attendance training provided to staff who have a specified attendance function.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, including recent and historic trends, benchmarking against appropriate comparator schools and local, regional and national data, and paying particular attention to student cohorts that face greater barriers to attendance.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Monitoring absence data and reporting it to the governors
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with the LA by notifying them where a student's name is added to or deleted from the school's admission register outside of standard transition times.

- Providing the LA, at the frequency agreed with the LA and no less frequently than once per calendar month, with the names and addresses of students of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or who have been absent continuously for ten school days where their absence has been recorded using one or more of codes G, N, O and/or U.
- Providing the LA with a sickness return for any student of compulsory school age who is recorded with code I where there are reasonable grounds to believe the student will miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively during the school year because of sickness.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every student has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Working with parents of students with SEND to develop specific support approaches for attendance, including where school transport is regularly being missed and where students with SEND face barriers within school.
- Ensuring that a student's social worker and/or youth offending team worker, where applicable, is informed of any unexplained absence.

Staff will be responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring students do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual students to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer will be responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance on a day-to-day basis and identifying unexplained or concerning absence.
- Contacting parents regarding absence and following up unexplained absence in line with the school's procedures.
- Maintaining accurate attendance records and supporting the accurate use of attendance codes.
- Communicating with students and families about attendance and helping to identify barriers to regular attendance.
- Escalating persistent, severe or otherwise concerning absence to the Senior Attendance Champion and supporting agreed interventions.

Students will be responsible for:

- Attending school regularly and attending all required lessons.
- Arriving at school on time and being ready to learn.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents will be responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school on the first day of an unexpected absence, providing the reason for the absence and advising when their child is expected to return.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for students' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and students.

Students will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at **09:00hrs**, and students will be in their classroom, ready to begin registration at this time; therefore, students will be expected to be on the school site by 0**8:55hrs**. Students will have two half hour breaks one at starting at **11:00hrs Mon-Tues, 11:10hrs Weds-Thurs and 11:15am on Fridays.** The second break starts at **13:10hrs Mon-Tues, 13:15hrs Weds-Fri** - students will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **09:20 Mon-Tues, 09:35 Weds-Thurs and 09:45 on Fridays**. Students will receive a mark if they were absent when the register started being taken but arrive before the register is closed
- Students who arrive Late but before registers closed will receive a Late mark. Students will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time

Class teachers will also take informal registers at the start of each lesson period to ensure that students are attending all timetabled lessons. These registers will be analysed alongside formal registers in line with the section of this policy.

Students will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

The school will actively discourage late arrival, seek explanations from parents for lateness and monitor patterns of late arrival to identify where further support or intervention may be needed.

5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before **09:00hrs** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a student is absent and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to provide a reason for the absence, the attendance officer or other designated member of staff will contact the parent as soon as practicable on the first day of absence. Where absence continues without explanation, the school will make further contact with the parent and take appropriate steps to establish the student's whereabouts and ensure their safety.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not routinely request medical evidence where a student is absent due to illness. Where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, the school may request appropriate supporting evidence. Where a parent cannot provide evidence in the form requested but can provide other evidence, the school will take this into account.

Where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, the school will work with the student and their parents to understand the barriers to attendance and agree appropriate actions or interventions. The attendance officer will support the day-to-day implementation of agreed actions, with the Senior Attendance Champion overseeing the school's strategic response and escalation where required.

The school will provide the LA, at the frequency agreed with the LA and no less frequently than once per calendar month, with the names and addresses of students of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or who have been absent continuously for ten school days where their absence has been recorded using one or more of codes G, N, O and/or U.

The school will provide the LA with a sickness return for any student of compulsory school age who is recorded with code I where the school has reasonable grounds to believe that the student will miss 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively, because of sickness. Only one sickness return will be required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year.

Where a student does not return from a period of leave or has a continuous period of absence, the school and the LA will carry out joint reasonable enquiries, where required under the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, to establish the student's whereabouts. Where the student lives in a different local authority area, the School LA will liaise with the Home LA as appropriate. If, following reasonable enquiries, the student's name is lawfully removed from the school's admission register, the relevant LA will consider whether the student should be identified as a child missing education.

Where the school is unable to establish the reason for a student's absence and there are safeguarding concerns, the school will take appropriate action in line with its safeguarding procedures. The school will recognise that unexplained or prolonged absence from education can be a safeguarding warning sign.

Where a student has registered at school but is subsequently absent from an expected lesson or activity without permission, staff will follow the school's procedures for locating the student and establishing the reason for the absence. Any unexplained internal absence will be followed up promptly and safeguarding action will be taken where necessary.

The school's internal attendance reporting and escalation arrangements may include the following staff, according to the nature and seriousness of the attendance concern:

1. Form tutor
2. Head of year or other relevant pastoral lead
3. Attendance officer
4. Safeguarding Officer
5. Headteacher, where appropriate

The school will involve the LA School Attendance Support Team and other external services where appropriate.

6. Attendance register

The school uses **Bromcom** to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session, at the same time for all registered students.

The register will record the appropriate national attendance or absence code for every student, reflecting whether they are attending the school, attending an approved educational activity or other permitted provision, absent, or unable to attend in accordance with the circumstances set out in the relevant regulations.

The school will use the national attendance codes set out in Regulation 10 of The School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = Planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
- C1 = Leave of absence granted by the school for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for a compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- I = Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- S = Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- T = Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- N = Reason for absence not yet established; where the reason cannot be established within five school days, the school will amend the entry to Code O.
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- D = Dual registered at another school

- B = Attending any other approved educational activity
- J1 = Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- K = Attending education provision arranged by the LA
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- Q = Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements, in accordance with the circumstances set out in the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- W = Work experience
- X = Non-compulsory school age student not required to attend school
- 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 student 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
- Z = Prospective student not on admission register

Students who are not physically attending school but are receiving remote education will continue to be recorded as absent using the appropriate absence code. Remote education will only be used in accordance with the DfE's guidance, including as a last resort where appropriate and as part of a plan to reintegrate the student into school.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name of the person who made the amendment. The attendance register will only routinely be amended where the reason for absence could not be established when the register was taken and it subsequently becomes necessary to correct the entry.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for six years from the date the data was entered.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the student and the impact on the student's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a student a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the child's relevant Year Leader in writing as soon as possible prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the student's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the student can be away from school. A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation will not generally be considered an exceptional circumstance.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a student to take part in protest activity during school hours.

A leave of absence for a student during term time will only be granted if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the school attendance regulations 2024 which are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad.
- Attending an interview.
- Study leave.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a student out of school will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may result in a penalty notice or other legal intervention being considered in accordance with the National Framework for Penalty Notices and the LA's Local Code of Conduct.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to request approval for their child's absence as far in advance as is practicable.

Leave for a medical or dental appointment will only be granted where an application is made in advance by a parent and the school is satisfied, based on the individual facts of the case, that exceptional circumstances justify the leave. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the minimum amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will have the discretion to grant leave of absence during school hours for students to undertake employment, whether paid or unpaid, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Leave of absence for the purpose of employment will only be granted under the circumstances set out in Regulation 11(2) of the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, namely:

- Where the LA has issued a licence for the student to take part in a performance as regulated by section 37(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963.
- Where a licence is not required because an exception applies under section 37(3) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, including where a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) covering the student has been granted by the local authority in which the performance will take place, or by the Secretary of State.
- Where a Justice of the Peace has granted a licence under section 25(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 for the student to travel abroad for a performance or another regulated purpose.

The school will give due consideration to requests for leave of absence supported by a licence issued by a local authority or a BOPA. Such requests will be treated sympathetically, provided the school is satisfied that participation in the activity will not have a detrimental impact on the student's education.

Where a LA licence specifies the dates on which a student is permitted to be absent for the purpose of a performance, the school will record the absence for those dates as if a formal leave of absence has been requested and granted.

In cases where a licence issued by the LA does not specify particular dates, or where the absence is supported by a BOPA or another form of exemption or licence—such as one granted by a Justice of the Peace under relevant legislation—the decision to grant leave of absence will remain at the discretion of the school.

Code J1: Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

The school will usually grant leave of absence where an application has been made in advance by the parent who the student normally lives with and the leave is to enable the student to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution, e.g. college, sixth form or another educational institution.

The interview must take place during the session for which it is recorded.

This code will be recorded as an authorised absence for statistical purposes.

Code S: Study leave for a public examination

The school may grant leave of absence under regulation 11(5) for a student to study for a public examination where the leave has been agreed in advance with a parent with whom the student normally lives, or with the student where they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence.

Study leave will not be granted by default once tuition for the examination syllabus is complete and will be used sparingly. Provision will still be made available for students who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Code C2: Students subject to a part-time timetable

In very exceptional circumstances and where it is in a student's best interests, the school will grant leave of absence to accommodate for a student on a part-time timetable.

The school will grant a leave of absence under Regulation 11(6) to temporarily reduce the timetable of a student of compulsory school age to part-time, where both the school and the parent with whom the student normally resides have agreed – on an exceptional basis – that the student should receive part-time education for a limited period. This agreement must include the specific times and dates the student is expected to attend during the temporary part-time arrangement.

Where a student is receiving full-time education but only attends the school on a part-time basis—such as in cases of dual registration, part-time unregistered alternative provision, or flexi-schooling, the part-time timetable code will not be used. Instead, the school will record the student's absence using the appropriate attendance code that reflects the reason the student is not attending that particular session.

In such circumstances, the days on which the student is expected to attend school will be agreed in advance.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to notify the school as far in advance as possible where their child will be absent for religious observance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the student's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

Where the relevant religious body sets apart only one day for a religious observance, only that day will be recorded using Code R. Any additional absence requested will be considered separately as a request for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Parent's travelling for occupational purposes

Where a student is a mobile child and their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business, the parent will be expected to notify the school of the absence as far in advance as possible. Code T will only be used where the student has no fixed abode and the parent is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place. Occasional or short-term travel will not normally meet the requirements of this code.

The school will not routinely require evidence that a parent is travelling for occupational purposes; however, evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason given for the absence.

Where a parent is travelling for occupational purposes in England, the school will support continuity of education and, where appropriate, the student will be expected to attend a school in the area where the parent is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that students with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health conditions, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. The school will maintain the same high ambition for their attendance as for all other students, while providing additional support and reasonable adjustments where needed.

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

Where the school has concerns that a student's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a student that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All students will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

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

- Inform the LA where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a student of compulsory school age will miss 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively, because of sickness, and work with the LA to support continuity of education.
- Provide the LA with information about the student's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the student reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the student is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the student to stay in contact with other students during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any students with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the student is attending school as normal and there have been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of students with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out a strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying students' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Using a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable only in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the student's best interests, with parental agreement, regular review dates, a clear proposed end date and the aim of returning the student to full-time education as soon as possible. A part-time timetable will not be used to manage behaviour.
- Ensuring a student can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby students can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Where a student subject to a part-time timetable has an EHC plan, the school will discuss the arrangement with the LA so that the student's support package can be reviewed as appropriate. Where the student has a social worker, the school will keep them informed and involved in the process.

The school will not routinely request medical evidence to support illness-related absence. Reasonable evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, or where a student has prolonged or repeated illness and further information would help the school understand their needs, identify appropriate support or reasonable adjustments, or accurately record the absence. The school will not be rigid about the form of evidence requested and will consider other appropriate evidence provided by parents.

9. Absence in exceptional circumstances

The school may grant a leave of absence where exceptional circumstances apply. Each application will be considered individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context. Where leave is granted, the school will determine the number of days for which the student may be absent.

The school will only grant a leave of absence where an application is made in advance by a parent with whom the student normally lives, or by the student themselves if they will have reached the end of compulsory school age by the time of the absence.

Generally, a request for a holiday or other absence for the purposes of leisure and recreation will not constitute an exceptional circumstance, and such absences will not be granted.

Where leave of absence is granted because of exceptional circumstances, Code C will be used to record the absence. The school will consider each application individually and will determine the appropriate length of leave granted.

10. Truancy

Truancy will be considered to have occurred where a student is absent from school, or from part of the school day, without permission and without a legitimate reason for the absence having been established. This includes internal truancy, where a student is present on the school site but is absent from a timetabled lesson or other required activity without permission.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of students and understand the importance of continuity in each student's learning.

Any student with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the **school office** and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken where there are concerns that a student may be truanting. The attendance officer or other designated member of staff will take appropriate steps to establish the student's whereabouts and, where necessary, contact the student's parent to establish the reason for the absence and ensure the student's safety. Where concerns persist or the absence

Where truancy or other unauthorised absence forms part of a wider attendance concern, the school will work with the student and their parents to understand and address any barriers to attendance. Where support is appropriate, it will be offered before legal intervention is considered.

Where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with, or where support is not appropriate, the school will work with the LA to consider formal support or legal intervention. This may include a Notice to Improve, a penalty notice or another appropriate attendance legal intervention, in accordance with the National Framework for Penalty Notices and the LA's Local Code of Conduct.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular student will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same student within a three-year rolling period will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same student within that three-year period, and alternative action will be considered instead.

Where the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but has not been successful or engaged with, the school or LA will usually consider issuing a Notice to Improve before a penalty notice. The improvement period will normally be between three and six weeks and will set out the attendance improvement expected and the support available.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

11. Absent students

Where a student is identified as missing from a timetabled lesson but is believed to remain on the school premises, the school will follow its internal procedures for locating the student immediately. Where the student cannot be located, the procedures below will be followed.

Students will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a student going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the absent student will inform reception.
- A check will be done immediately with previous teachers to confirm child's attendance to their lessons and if required, SEN Department.
- A member of the office team will conduct a thorough search of the whole school grounds.
- If the student has still not been located an all staff email will be sent asking if anyone knows the whereabouts of the student. If the student has not been found after all searches have been conducted then the parents of the student will be contacted.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided
- If the parents have had no contact from the student, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, parents are advised to then report their child missing to the Police.
- If the student has an allocated social worker and/or youth offending team worker, is a looked-after child, or has any other identified vulnerability that may increase safeguarding concerns, the appropriate professionals will be informed without delay, where relevant.
- When the student has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the student to ensure they are safe and well
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the student has been located

Following the incident, the DSL will consider the circumstances that led to the student leaving or becoming absent from the school premises and will ensure that any necessary support, safeguarding action or behavioural response is put in place. Where appropriate, sanctions may be applied in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The school will ensure that any necessary attendance records are reviewed and amended, where appropriate, to provide an accurate record of the student's attendance and absence during the relevant session.

12. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing and improving attendance, the DSL and the attendance officer, will:

- Ensure appropriate interventions and support are available to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of attendance strategies and interventions, adapting them where necessary.
- Ensure that students at risk of persistent or severe absence and their parents are supported to understand and address barriers to attendance.
- Where absence intensifies, ensure that support is increased and that the school works with the LA and other relevant partners where appropriate.
- Where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with, oversee the school's work with the LA to formalise support or consider appropriate legal intervention.
- Using form tutors, heads of year and pastoral staff, where appropriate, to identify emerging attendance concerns, discuss barriers with students and provide ongoing attendance support.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to identify individual students and cohorts where patterns of absence are emerging and develop appropriate strategies to improve attendance. Interventions will take account of the particular needs and barriers of the students and families they are designed to support.

Where attendance rewards are used, the school will ensure they are applied sensitively and without discrimination and may recognise good attendance, punctuality and improvements in attendance.

Any attendance reward scheme will take account of individual circumstances and will be designed so that students who face additional barriers to attendance, including students with SEND, disabilities, health conditions or other significant circumstances, are not unfairly disadvantaged. Where appropriate, improvements in attendance or individual attendance goals may be recognised.

13. Working with parents to improve attendance

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

The school will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each student wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a student where the student is absent without notification or authorisation.

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

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the student and their parents to understand and address the specific barriers to regular attendance. Where absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, or where engagement with support is proving challenging, the matter will be escalated to the Senior Attendance Champion, who may lead more formal discussions with the family and involve the LA School Attendance Support Team where appropriate. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for student absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where barriers are related to the student's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the Senior Attendance Champion and relevant school staff, such as the DSL and SENCO, to address them and arrange appropriate support or reasonable adjustments. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, the school will work with the student, parents, the LA and other relevant partners to help the family access appropriate support, which may include referrals to external services, early help or whole-family support.

Any agreed attendance support, actions or interventions will be regularly reviewed with the student and their parents to assess their effectiveness and will be adapted where necessary to reflect the student's and family's circumstances.

14. Persistent absence (PA)

The school will recognise PA as circumstances where a student misses 10% or more of school. Severe absence will be recognised in circumstances where a student misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

There are various groups of students who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Students with a social worker, including children in need and students subject to child protection plans.
- LAC.
- Young carers.
- Students who are eligible for FSM.
- Students with SEND.
- Students with physical or mental health conditions.
- Students who have faced bullying and/or discrimination.
- Students from groups or backgrounds that have, or have historically had, lower attendance than their peers.

The school will ensure it provides support to students at risk of PA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

The school will use a number of methods to help support students at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the student and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Regularly reviewing progress and the impact of support with the student and their parents
- Making regular contact with the student's parent to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.
- Reviewing lesson-level attendance data to identify whether absence is associated with particular subjects, lessons, times of day or other aspects of the student's timetable or school experience.

The school will give particular priority to students who are severely absent, meaning they miss 50 percent or more of school. These students will be treated as a top priority for attendance support, and the school will work jointly with the LA and other relevant partners to identify and address the barriers to attendance and coordinate any intensive or whole-family support required.

Where a student at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the student in line with the school's duty of care.

Where all appropriate avenues of support have been facilitated and any necessary educational support or provision has been put in place, but severe unauthorised absence continues, the school will recognise that this may constitute neglect. Any safeguarding concerns will be escalated in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, including referral to children's social care where appropriate.

The Senior Attendance Champion will ensure that patterns of persistent and severe absence are a regular focus of the school's attendance monitoring so that individual students and cohorts requiring targeted support are identified as early as possible.

15. Penalty notices and legal intervention

The school will provide appropriate support to improve attendance wherever possible. Where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with, or where support is not appropriate in the circumstances, the Senior Attendance Champion will work with the LA to consider whether formal support or legal intervention is appropriate. Attendance legal intervention will only be used in relation to students of compulsory school age and will be considered on an individual, case-by-case basis. In particular, the Senior Attendance Champion will consider:

- Whether support is appropriate in the individual case and, where it is appropriate, whether sufficient support has been provided and has been successful or engaged with. Where support is not appropriate, e.g. in the case of an unauthorised term-time holiday, whether a penalty notice is appropriate in accordance with the National Framework and the LA's Local Code of Conduct.
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour, or if further support or other legal intervention is more appropriate.
- Whether issuing a penalty notice in this case is appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010, such as if the student has a disability.
- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.

- Working with the LA to consider putting an attendance contract or an Education Supervision Order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but has not been successful or engaged with, a Notice to Improve will usually be issued as a final opportunity for the parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. A Notice to Improve may not be used where support is not appropriate or where it is considered unlikely to have a behavioural impact. Any Notice to Improve will be issued in accordance with the LA's Local Code of Conduct and will normally provide an improvement period of between three and six weeks.

Where a student reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

Where a penalty notice is considered appropriate, it may be issued by the headteacher, a deputy or assistant headteacher authorised by the headteacher, an LA officer or the police. Any penalty notice will be issued in accordance with the LA's Local Code of Conduct and the National Framework for Penalty Notices.

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

Only two penalty notices may be issued to the same parent in respect of the same student within a three-year rolling period. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same student will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Where all other appropriate voluntary and formal support or legal interventions have failed, or where they have been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances, the school will work with the LA where prosecution is being considered as a last resort. Only the LA may prosecute parents for school attendance offences.

Where a parent is prosecuted for failing to secure their child's regular attendance, the penalties available to the court will depend on the offence. These may include a fine of up to £1,000 under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, or a fine of up to £2,500, a community order and/or imprisonment for up to three months under section 444(1A).

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where voluntary support, including any appropriate early help and attendance contract, has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) may be considered as an alternative form of legal intervention without criminal prosecution. The school and LA will consider whether voluntary support has been exhausted and whether an ESO would be beneficial for the student and parent. The LA will fully consider the use of an ESO before progressing to prosecution.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the LA will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Where a parent persistently fails to comply with directions given under an ESO, they may be guilty of an offence and the LA may prosecute. On conviction, the parent may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000. Persistent non-compliance will also be considered with children's social care to determine whether further action is required to secure the student's welfare.

Once an ESO is secured, the LA will appoint an appropriate lead practitioner to act as supervisor. The school will work in partnership with the supervisor and provide support where appropriate.

16. Monitoring and analysing absence

The Senior Attendance Champion, supported by the attendance officer, will ensure that attendance and absence data is regularly monitored and analysed so that emerging patterns of poor attendance are identified and appropriate support or intervention is provided as early as possible.

Weekly attendance patterns and trends will be monitored at individual student, cohort and year-group level, including punctuality, to identify early indicators of poor attendance and enable timely support.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Year groups preparing for exams or other key transition points.
- Individual students.
- Demographic groups, e.g. students from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of students, e.g. students with SEND, students with a social worker, LAC, young carers, students with long-term health conditions and students eligible for FSM.
- Students at risk of persistent or severe absence.

The Senior Attendance Champion, supported by the attendance officer, will ensure that thorough analysis of attendance data is conducted on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify the following:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes
- Particular days of poor attendance
- Subjects, lessons or times of the school day where lesson attendance or punctuality is comparatively low.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence
- Barriers to attendance

The attendance officer will provide regular attendance information and reports to relevant staff to support the tracking of individual students and the implementation of attendance procedures. The Senior Attendance Champion will monitor and evaluate the impact of attendance strategies and interventions, using the findings to adapt or inform future approaches.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including recent and historic trends and the attendance of student cohorts that face greater or entrenched barriers to attendance, and will support and challenge the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance improvement.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional and national data and, where appropriate, the performance of similar schools to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share effective practice with other schools.

17. Training of staff

The school recognises that early identification and intervention are essential to preventing patterns of poor attendance from becoming entrenched. Staff will receive appropriate training to enable them to understand their role in improving attendance and to identify students who may require additional support.

The governing board will ensure that all staff receive appropriate attendance training as part of their induction and that attendance is included in the school's continuing professional development offer. Training will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect evolving barriers to attendance and the needs of the school community.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances
- The law and requirements relating to school attendance, including the keeping of attendance and admission registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for students who need it

The governing board will ensure that the **Senior Attendance Champion**, attendance officer and any other staff with specified attendance functions receive dedicated attendance training appropriate to their role. This will include the skills required to interpret and analyse attendance data and any additional training required to support students and families to overcome commonly experienced barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that patterns of absence, including persistent or severe absence and children missing education, may be an important warning sign of safeguarding concerns, and will know how to identify, report and respond to such concerns in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

18. Deletion of names from the admission register

The school will only delete a student's name from the admission register where a ground for deletion set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is met. Where a relevant ground for deletion is met, the student's name will be deleted as required by the Regulations. A student's name will not be removed for any other reason, as doing so could constitute off-rolling.

Where a student's name is deleted from the admission register, their name will also be deleted from the attendance register at the same time.

Where a student transfers to another school, the school will delete the student's name from its admission register as soon as the student is entered on the admission register of the new school, subject to any applicable exceptions under the Regulations. The school will continue to record the student's attendance and absence up to the date of deletion and will transfer the appropriate student information through the school-to-school (S2S) system.

The school will make returns to the LA when students' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of students whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a student's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the student will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the student normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the student normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the student's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the student is going to live with and the date the student will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the student's other school and when the student began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the student's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered student and their attendance at any given time. Students' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

19. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **95 percent** – full details of the school's attendance levels can be found on the **school website**.

This policy will be reviewed every **three years** by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **1 September 2029.**