



**Holy Cross Catholic
Multi Academy Company**

School Attendance Policy 2023-2024

Responsible for Policy	Marina Kelly
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**HCC MAC St Thomas More Catholic Primary School
Policy**

This Policy is based on guidance produced by Coventry City Council for schools and academies.

This guidance has been written in accordance with the Department for Education's (DfE) Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance (2022).

**Document Control:
Version History**

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1.0	Draft	05/2021	J Parry	HCCMAC, Central Team	Creation of document from template
		14/12/2022	J. Parry	HCCMAC, Central Team	MAC Board Approval
		23/03/2023	J Parry	HCCMAC, Central Team	Policy reviewed
2.0	Draft	17.10.2023	J Parry	HCCMAC, Central Team	Policy revised based on LA model policy to comply with latest guidance.
		October 23	S Collins	STM	Personalised to STM practices
		27.11.23	S Collins	STM LGB	LGB Approved

Whole School Attendance Policy

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School



Policy Consultation and Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. All parents are informed about the policy when their children join the school and on a regular basis through the newsletter and letters home where relevant.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed in full by Holy Cross Catholic Multi Academy Board on at least an annual basis.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Catholic schools aim to be places where love of one's neighbour is obvious at all times. As St. John reports, Christ said to His disciples at the Last Supper 'This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you'.
- 1.2 Catholic schools are staffed by teachers and support staff who are not only qualified and expert in their own field but who also, having freely chosen to work in a Catholic institution, commit themselves to care for and support each other in every way possible consistent with the teachings of Christ, Gospel values, Catholic doctrine, and the ethos of the school.
 - 1.2.1 Holy Cross Catholic Multi Academy Company (MAC) recognises that attending school regularly can be a protective factor for children and young people and that there is a strong relationship between good school attendance and achieving positive outcomes. The MAC has adopted this policy in order to promote positive pupil attendance
 - 1.2.2 All members of our school communities have a duty to ensure that Gospel values underpin the relationships within the school and should draw on the guidance offered in 'Christ at the Centre'. Whilst not definitive, the core values based on the Beatitudes may be summarised as follows:
 - faithfulness and integrity;
 - dignity and compassion;
 - humility and gentleness;
 - truth and justice;
 - forgiveness and mercy;
 - purity and holiness;
 - tolerance and peace;
 - service and sacrifice (Christ at the Centre' 2008 Fr Marcus Stock STL MA).
- 1.5 Holy Cross Catholic MAC acknowledges its obligation to promote a positive learning and working environment.
- 1.6 Holy Cross Catholic MAC is also aware of its duties under racial, disability and gender equality laws including the training of employees in their responsibilities.

Holy Cross Catholic MAC will ensure that prompt and appropriate action is taken to deal with any complaints which come under the scope of this Attendance Policy. Holy Cross Catholic MAC expects all those dealing with complaints to make objective decisions, without fear or favour.

- 1.9 This policy will be applied in accordance with statutory regulations for the governance of Holy Cross schools which may apply at any time in accordance with the procedures and delegations adopted by Holy Cross Catholic MAC under those regulations.
- 1.12 This policy is for use by Holy Cross Catholic MAC and some academies' governance terminology differs within Archdiocesan Multi Academy Companies. This policy uses the term Director to represent Trustees of the Company. The term Local Governing Body is used throughout.

2. Aims

At Holy Cross Catholic Multi Academy Company (MAC) we value the attendance of all pupils. There is a strong relationship between good school attendance and achieving positive outcomes for children. It is recognised that attending school regularly can be a protective factor for children and young people. It is important that as a school we offer a safe environment, positive relationships, high quality teaching and learning opportunities to develop social and emotional skills.

Ensuring that children attend school every day will help achieve this ambition by maximising their education and social achievements as well as developing self-discipline, organisation and preparedness for the work environment. Improving attendance and reducing absence, especially persistent absence is a priority for our school and Coventry City Council.

[Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils, and governors to:

- Support pupil's achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences.
- Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning.

3. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- and act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

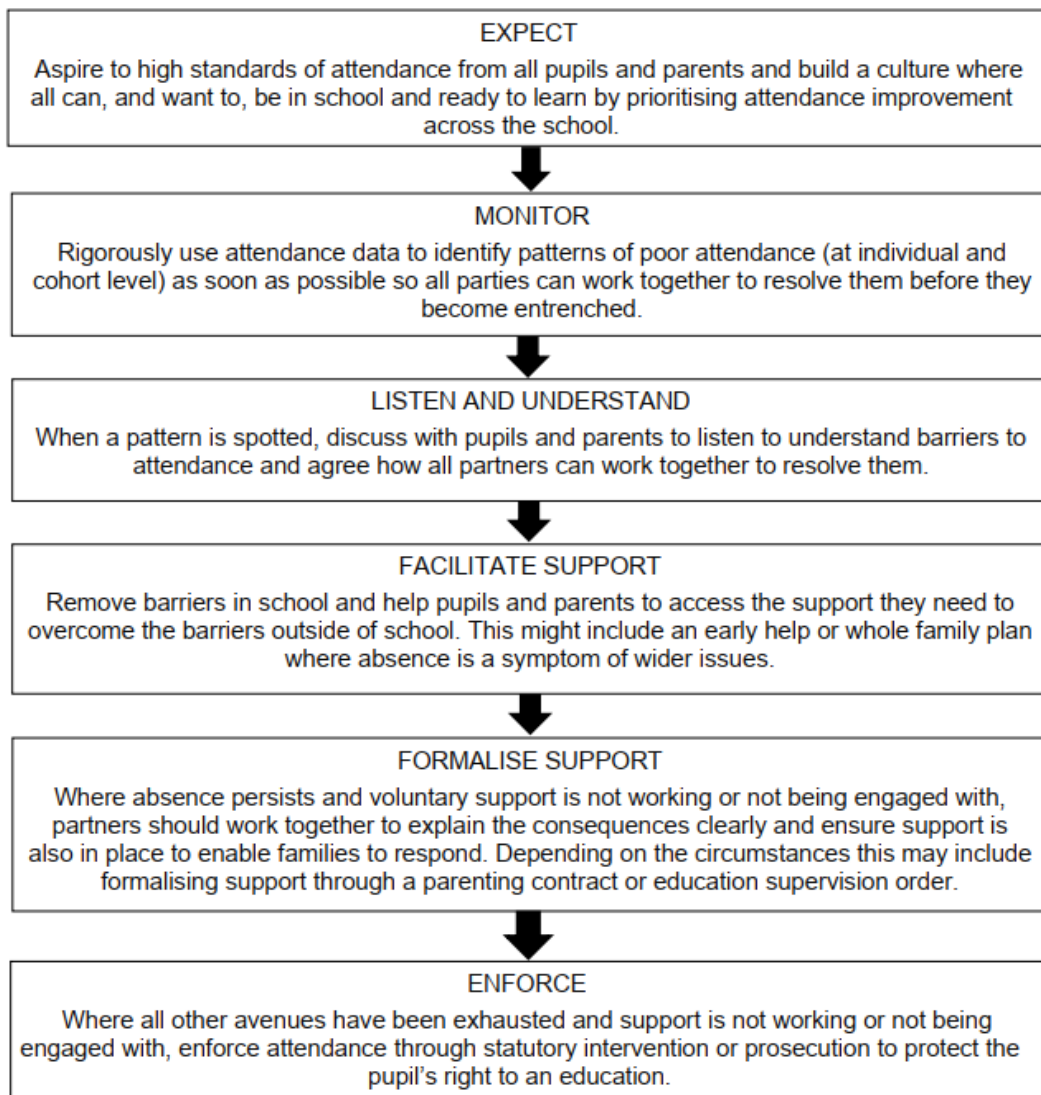
A “Parent” is defined as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

4. Attendance Objectives

Holy Cross Catholic MAC’s School Attendance Policy:

- Is easy to understand for pupils, parents and staff
- Is clear and consistently applied, transparent and fair
- Considers the individual needs of pupils and their families
- Is easy to find so that the whole school community is aware of our attendance expectations
- Includes the contact details of key staff to make it easy for parents to get in touch
- Is reviewed by staff regularly and involves pupils and parents because school attendance matters to everyone
- Is followed in accordance with the procedures in the flowchart below



5. Roles and Responsibilities (see also Appendix 4)

At Holy Cross Catholic MAC we believe that school attendance matters to everyone. School attendance is a shared responsibility by Directors, governors, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community.

Schools should insert the names of key staff with responsibility for the management of attendance. Working together to improve school attendance states this should include the name and contact details of-

- Senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school
- School staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis and
- School staff who pupils and parents should contact for more detailed support on attendance

Role	Name	Contact details
Senior Attendance Lead	Mrs S Collins	admin@st-thomasmore.coventry.sch.uk
Attendance Officer	Mrs M James	admin@st-thomasmore.coventry.sch.uk
Named Governor/Trustee for Attendance	Mrs A Kelly	admin@st-thomasmore.coventry.sch.uk

5.1 The MAC Board

Directors of the MAC are committed to:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents.
- Ensuring attendance is prioritised in wider improvement strategies, such as raising attainment, behaviour, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding. This may include having a link governor or trustee that focusses on attendance.
- Ensuring the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent attendance support is provided for pupils who require it most by prioritising the staff and resources needed. This includes ensuring schools engage and work effectively with the local authority School Attendance Support Team and wider local partners and services.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils, but that processes and support are adapted to the individual needs of particular pupils. This includes those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Regularly evaluating the effectiveness of their school's processes and improvement efforts to ensure they are meeting the needs of pupils as experiences and barriers to attendance evolve.
- In addition, the MAC Board will identify and monitor attendance patterns across their schools to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools.

5.2 The Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Supporting the school to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensuring school staff receive training on school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School will:

- 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.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support access to any required services where out of school barriers are identified.
- Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners and where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.
- Put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers where absence becomes persistent.
- Hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future where there is a lack of engagement.
- Work with the local authority on legal intervention where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate.
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.
- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.
- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils with SEND and/or medical conditions and their parents to maximise attendance.

- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals for children with SEND and medical conditions.
- Regularly monitor data for children with SEND and medical conditions, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.
- Inform the pupil's social worker, where there is one, if there are any unexplained absences and if the child's name is to be deleted from the register.

5.3 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

5.4 Parents

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School requests that parents:

- 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.
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

5.5 Pupils

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.

- Speak to their class teacher/tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- ~~Bring a note of explanation from their parents or guardians to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen.~~
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

6. Recording Absence and Attendance (See Appendix 1)

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department of Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.

6.1 Leave of absence

The headteacher can only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. The headteacher will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. All absences associated with a family holiday (without exceptional circumstances) during term time will be marked as unauthorised on the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority by the headteacher and be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

An advice note for parents and carers and an application form to request leave of absence can be found in Appendix 2 and 3.

A penalty notice request may be submitted to the Local Authority by the headteacher should: -

- The parent fail to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not authorised by the headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parent will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in a possible children missing from education procedure being instigated.

6.2 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that the parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must provide evidence of the appointment to the school in advance of the absence. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

6.3 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Holy Cross Catholic MAC acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

6.4 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- a pupil's/family member's birthday,
- closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes,
- family holiday
- refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend' holidays taken without the authorisation of the school.

7. Our Procedures

7.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, require schools to take an attendance register at the beginning of the morning session and once during each afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm. The school day finishes at 3.20pm.

7.2 Late Arrival at School

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 8.50am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The school register will be taken at 8.50am. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign the late book and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before 9.30am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9.30am. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

7.3 Expected absence procedure for parents

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9.30am and where no reason for absence is known.

- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned.
- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out.
- School will telephone home if a pupil leaves the school without permission.

In certain circumstances the school may also:

- Visit the home of the pupil.
- Text or write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues.
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement.
- Discuss the pupil at the termly Targeted Support Meetings to seek advice and guidance on additional support strategies.
- Refer to Early Help and/or other external agencies to offer support, guidance, and advice.
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures.
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken.

7.4 Rewards and Interventions

The target for attendance across the school is 96%.
Attendance for each child is monitored regularly.

Stage 1: Prevention

Criteria: Attendance is between 91% and 100%

Pupils who have attendance between 91% and 100% will receive support from school and other universal services they may be accessing i.e., GP

Every week, children whose attendance was 98% or above the previous week receive a housepoint.

Stage 2: Early Intervention

Criteria: Attendance is between 81% and 90%

Every four weeks, the parents of any child with less than 90% attendance receives a text informing parents of this, encouraging improved attendance and inviting them to seek support from the school.

At each half term, the parents of any child with less than 90% attendance receive a letter.

Parents/carers may be invited to an informal meeting or conversation with the child's class teacher or the Learning Mentor to identify any barriers to attendance and offer Early Help.

Pupils who have attendance between 81% and 90% may require support from other services outside of school and universal services at stage 1.

Stage 3: Targeted Support

Criteria: Attendance is below 80%

Pupils who have attendance below 80% may require multi-agency support in addition to that provided at stage 2.

Children who have attendance below 80% are discussed at the Targeted Support Meeting with the LA Attendance Officer. The Early Help Assessment Coordinator attends this meeting also. The LA Attendance Officer will advise the school how best to address attendance of each individual child and what further support can be offered. Parents may be invited to an informal meeting with the Learning Mentor, to a formal meeting with the Headteacher, requested to adhere to an attendance contract or, if improvement has not been evident despite additional support being offered, may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.

8. Tailored Support

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Checking in with your child at regular intervals
- Addressing any barrier to attendance that has been identified
- Adapting your child's routine for arriving at school (e.g. changing the door they come in through, what happens first thing when they arrive, etc)
- Assigning a specific member of staff to greet them as they arrive
- Other strategy identified in conversation with you, your child or other professional.

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. This may include a referral to Early Help or a Parenting Contract.

9. Persistent Absence and the use of legal interventions

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 40 sessions (20 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a

criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

9.1 Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed penalty notices will be issued by the Headteacher to parents or carers if your children are absent from school for the following reasons:

- Holiday/leave of absence during term time
- Irregular attendance including persistent late arrival to school (after registration has closed) which equates to 10 or more sessions within a current 5-week period.

Penalty Notices will be issued by post to your home address to each parent or carer by the local authority at the request of the Headteacher. The Penalty Notice is:

- £60 for each of your children if paid in full within 21 days
- £120 if paid in full after 21 days but within 28 days.

10. Staged Reintegration/Reduced timetables

All children of compulsory school age are legally entitled to receive a suitable full-time education and the school and local authority have a statutory duty to ensure that all children in the area receive such an education. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so.

We will not use a reduced timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A reduced timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision where applicable.

We will never put a reduced timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family

We will notify the Attendance and Children Missing Education Team of all reduced timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

11. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting Children With Medical Needs Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Missing From Education Procedures

12. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, \(September 2022\)](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE \(January 2015\)](#)
- [Children missing education, DfE \(September 2016\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education, DfE \(September 2022\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children, DfE \(July 2018\)](#)

13. Appendices

The following pages contain information relevant to this policy.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

**Holy Cross Catholic MAC Exceptional Leave of Absence
Advice for Parents**

The school is very reluctant for a child to miss any part of his/her education.

1. There are a number of sources regarding attendance, including our school newsletters, the school [website](#) and the DfE (Department for Education) www.education.gov.uk Term dates are published well in advance on the school website.
2. The reference in law to Headteacher's being able (at their discretion) to agree up to 10 days of leave of absence has been removed. **This means that holidays in term time will not be granted.** Under Government regulations, leave of absence can only be granted by the Headteacher in the case of exceptional circumstances and is for a maximum of **10 days**. The leave must be authorised **before** any tickets are booked and where possible, be at least 4 weeks before the beginning of the absence.

The decision to authorise absence rests with the school and once the decision is made, it is final.

3. When considering exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher will take into account:
 - Attendance - A child with any less than 97% attendance is unlikely to be granted extended authorised absence, regardless of the reasons for their prior absence.
 - Proximity to exam dates – No child in year 2 or 6 will be granted leave in the same term as the testing period.
4. If permission is granted, children must ensure they are up to date with their schoolwork before they leave and in addition, it will be parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure that their son/daughter makes up any missed work in his/her **own time** upon return to school.
5. If a child becomes ill whilst abroad, please note that before returning to school they **must** be seen by their GP in the UK and be certified fit to return.
6. If permission is granted photocopies of airline or travel tickets will be required by the school office **before** travelling.

Should you decide to take your child out of school without the Headteacher's permission, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice by the Children and Families First Team under S23 (1) of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 will be issued and may result in a fine of up to £120. If a child does not return to school, they may be taken off the school roll.

Please note: Local Authority Guidance states that if two Penalty Notices have already been issued for periods of unauthorised leave, a Penalty Notice will NOT be issued on the third occasion and you will be taken straight to Court under the higher level aggravated offence. This means that you may be subject to a much more severe penalty i.e. a maximum fine of up to £2,500 or 3 months in custody or, a community order which may involve you doing a number of hours of unpaid work.

Appendix 3: Exceptional Leave Application

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Application form for Exceptional Student Leave – Academic Year 2023 - 2024
(to be emailed where possible)

Please read the information above before completing this form

The school will only authorise this absence if this form is completed and returned to the school at least **4 weeks before** you leave. In the event of an emergency situation at very short notice, please contact the school office who will refer to the Headteacher as necessary.

CHILD'S DETAILS	
Name	Class
Address	Telephone Number
PROPOSED DESTINATION	
DATES	
First day of absence	
Last day of absence	
Date return to school	
REASON FOR REQUEST	
ANY OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION OR MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES	
EVIDENCE MUST BE PRODUCED FOR MEDICAL AND PASSPORT APPOINTMENTS	

IMPORTANT: If your child is ill whilst away from school or he/she returns to the UK feeling unwell, it is essential that your child is examined by your local G.P. A medical note confirming that the child is not suffering from any infections or contagious illnesses and is fit to attend school **must** be received by the school before the child returns to school.

I agree to the conditions outlined in this document.	
I understand that it is my responsibly to ensure my son/daughter makes up any missed work in his/her own time upon return to school.	
I have read the school's extended authorised absence policy.	
SIGNED	(Person with Parental Responsibility)
PRINT NAME	DATE

Appendix 4: Summary Responsibilities

Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance (DfE May 2022)

All pupils

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

Appendix 4: Summary Responsibilities

Appendix 4: Summary Responsibilities

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:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act 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.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a termly 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.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where 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.</p>

Appendix 4: Summary Responsibilities

Persistently absent pupils

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

Appendix 4: Summary Responsibilities

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

Appendix 4: Summary Responsibilities

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Not applicable.	<p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.</p>	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

Appendix 4: Summary Responsibilities

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

Appendix 4: Summary Responsibilities

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.</p> <p>Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children.</p> <p>Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.</p>

Appendix 4: Summary Responsibilities

Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.	Ofsted considers schools' efforts to improve or sustain high attendance as part of inspections. Multi-academy trusts regularly review attendance data and support schools.	DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making. Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.	DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.

School Attendance Matters (Coventry City Council)

In Coventry it is our belief that good school attendance provides our pupils with the best chance of a bright and successful future. We do however realise that for some pupils there are barriers to attending school.

Why school attendance matters

Regular school attendance is an important part of giving children the best possible start in life. The aim should be to attend 100% of the time.

Research shows that pupils who attend school regularly achieve at higher levels than those who do not attend regularly, and they also have wider life chances. Attending school on a regular basis also helps to develop:

- Friendships
- Social skills
- Life skills
- Career pathways

Missed days in school can have a significant impact on all the above.

Yearly attendance	Yearly days missed	Yearly learning hours missed	Learning hours missed during school life (YR-Y11)
100%	0	0	0
97%	6	30	360
95%	10	50	600
90%	20	100	1200
80%	40	200	2400
50%	100	500	6000

In Coventry the overall absence rate for the academic year 2021/22 was 7.6%. This was 0.1% higher than the national average and 2.7% higher than the previous year in Coventry.

Those classed as disadvantaged (in receipt of Pupil Premium) have lower attendance than those classed as non-disadvantaged. For the academic year 2021/22 disadvantaged pupils in Coventry had an overall absence of 9%. This is an increase of 1.7% on the previous year. 27.4% of these pupils have a SEN provision.

Persistent absence (those pupils who miss 10% or more of school) was 23.5% in Coventry for the academic year 2021/22. This is an increase of 9.9% from the previous academic year and equates to 4,979 more pupils being persistent absentees in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21. This is also 1.0% higher than the national average in 2021/22.

Appendix 5: School Attendance Matters

What are we doing in Coventry

The barriers to accessing education are far reaching and complex and do not solely begin and end with the school. Often these barriers extend further than school and are specific to individual pupils and their families.

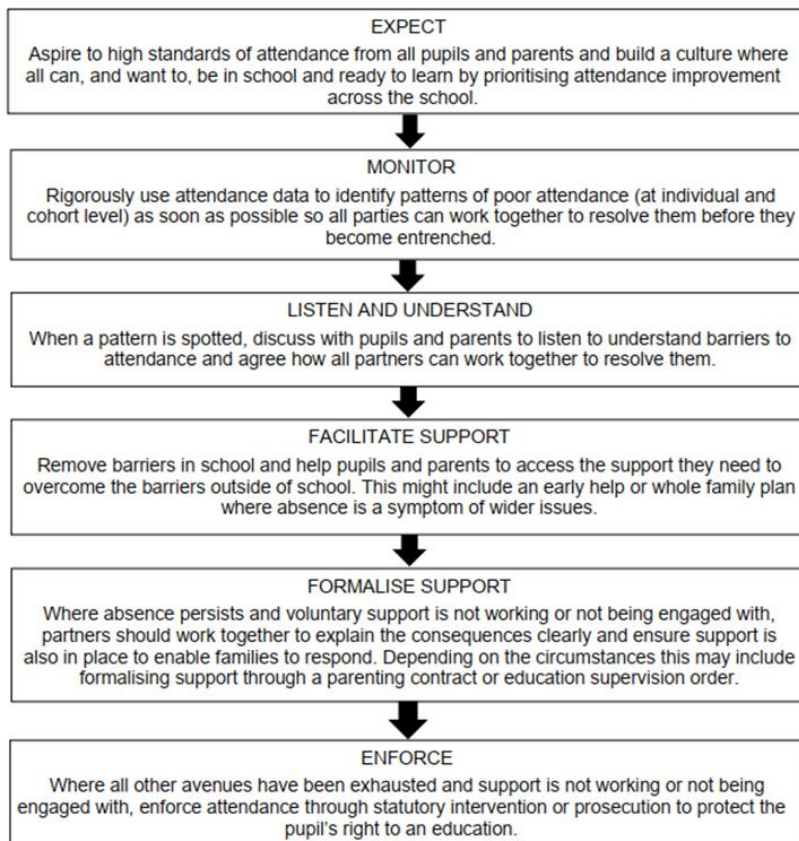
With our One Coventry approach we will work alongside and in partnership with schools and services across Coventry to ensure all pupils are supported to be able to attend school and will work to remove the barriers to school attendance.

Good attendance is not something to be viewed in isolation and it is the role of all involved to work with and support pupils and their families as a collective.

Our key stakeholders in Coventry are

- Pupils and their families
- School Attendance Team
- Schools
- SEND
- Early Help
- Virtual School
- Social Care
- Health

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or requires local work with, not All partners together to:



more broadly schools and partners to collaboratively against families. should work

How are we delivering attendance support in Coventry

Coventry's Staged Intervention model works to support schools, pupils and families to secure the right help at the right time.

Schools will provide a named school attendance officer who will act as the main point of contact for the named Local Authority School Attendance Officers (LAAO) and named Early Help Coordinators (EHAC).

Schools should seek support from Social Care if the child is known to be under a Child Protection plan or Child in Need plan. School attendance should inform part of the plan and social workers would be expected to be involved in any concerns raised around school attendance where they are already involved.

Stage 1: Prevention

Criteria: Attendance is between 91% and 100%

Lead practitioner: School

Pupils who have attendance between 91% and 100% will receive support from school and other universal services they may be accessing i.e., GP

Schools should follow their school attendance policy when a pupil is recorded as absent i.e.

- First day absence contact.
- Letter sent if absence falls below schools' attendance target
- If attendance does not improve request a meeting with parent/carer

Schools can contact their LAAO via phone or email for advice and guidance around attendance issues.

Stage 2: Early Intervention

Criteria: Attendance is between 81% and 90%

Lead practitioner: 1st school – 2nd EHAC if criteria is met

Pupils who have attendance between 81% and 90% may require support from other services outside of school and universal services at stage 1.

LAAO will attend termly meetings with the school and the EHAC to discuss pupils of concern and signpost the school to other services. (See *Appendix i* for details of the Targeted Support Meetings). **If the pupil is looked after the Virtual School and Social Worker should be invited to attend the Targeted Support Meeting if the pupil is due to be discussed.**

Schools should consider.

- Letters home
- Meeting with parent/carer in school
- Home visits
- Pastoral support
- Mentoring/counselling
- Reduced timetable
- SEMH&L
- SEND
- Extended School Non-Attendance Advisory Panel (ESNAAP)
- Social Care/Supporting Families teams (Children's Service)

Please note this list is not exhaustive.

Schools must initiate an Early Help Assessment and, if required, access support from an EHAC, who will be able to support to undertake the Early Help assessment and deliver the Early Help plan. The support may include joint home visits, attendance at Team Around the Family meetings, making necessary referrals, signposting and navigating to available services and advice and guidance relating to Right Help Right Time (RHRT) thresholds.

If during the completion of the Early Help Assessment, it is identified that the child and their family meet the Right Help Right Time level 3 i.e. multiple issues requiring a multiagency plan, the professional from school should request their Early Help Assessment Co-Ordinator progress the family to Supporting Families team. The professional who completed the request may be contacted by the supporting families team for a further discussion about the family and being part of the team around the family (TAF).

In most situations, the Children's Service Supporting Families team will be best placed to take the role of the Lead Professional and deliver a whole family plan, when the family's needs meet Right Help Right Time level 3. However, there will be some occasions where schools are the best placed agency to be the lead professional. The decision for this will be made following the Early Help Assessment.

If a family does not meet 3 of the supporting families criteria Children's Service Family Hub Teams will be able to offer interventions such as groups and activities and these can be included in the TAF as part of an Early Help plan that is led by a school.

At this point schools may also request a monitoring letter be sent out via the LA. Should the pupil's attendance not improve then a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued following the monitoring period. (See *Appendix ii* for details on Fixed Penalty Notices)

A Fixed Penalty Notice can only be issued by a head teacher, or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police.

Stage 3: Targeted Support

Criteria: Attendance is below 80%

Lead practitioner: LAAO

Pupils who have attendance below 80% may require multi-agency support in addition to that provided at stage 2.

When all attempts to engage with the pupil and family at stages 1 and 2 have failed school can discuss legal intervention with their LAAO. Schools will be asked to complete the Attendance Intervention form with attached evidence that everything has been done to support the pupil in improving their attendance at school.

If the LAAO is satisfied that the criteria have been met for legal intervention, they will support the school to complete one of the following.

- Parenting Contract
- Attendance Prosecution
 - School Attendance Order (only used where a pupil is not on a school roll)
 - Section 444(1) or 444(1A)

*(See **Appendix iii** for details on Legal Framework and Court Preparation)*

APPENDIX i. – Targeted Support Meetings

Pre-meeting

Information to be provided to LAAO 1 week before meeting.

- Pupils with under 90% attendance to have annotated note with the reason for absence and what school have put in place so far.
- School to provide a report identifying pupils with more than 10 sessions coded C.
- School to provide a report identifying pupils with more than 20 sessions coded I.
- School to provide report identifying any pupil coded B.
- School to identify specific pupils with below 80% attendance to be discussed 1 week before the meeting.
- School to complete and send Attendance Intervention form for any pupils where all support has been exhausted.

LAAO will analyse data and seek clarification from school prior to meeting if required.
LAAO will check Attendance Intervention forms to ensure all avenues have been exhausted prior to advising on legal intervention.

Meeting (1 day per secondary school / ½ day per primary school initially but subject to change)

Attendees

- School named attendance officer
 - LAAO
 - EHAC or Lead practitioners for an early help plan
 - Social Worker – where required
 - Virtual School – where required
 - Head of house/year head – where required
 - Pastoral lead – where required
-
- LAAO to chair meeting
 - Each professional in attendance will be responsible for recording their own actions from the meeting.
 - LAAO will record any advice given on specific students within their own database.
 - Identify and discuss pupils who are persistently or severely absent and those at risk of becoming so.
 - LAAO to provide advice and guidance on recording in register, strategies for support, legal intervention, and signposting to wider services.
 - Agree targeted actions for pupils discussed.
 - Agree who is best placed to lead on each pupil as per the stages above.

Follow up – legal intervention

If legal interventions have been discussed and agreed the LAAO agrees a time frame of support with schools around these interventions.

N.B. A Fixed Penalty Notice can only be issued by a head teacher, or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police.

APPENDIX ii. – Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

To underpin the principle of support first and to improve the consistency of approach for pupils and parents across the country, subject to Parliament, the Secretary of State intends to introduce a national framework ahead of the 2023-24 academic year.

Until such a time Coventry City Council will continue to adhere to its Code of Conduct and guidance below.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

Unauthorised absence for holiday goes direct to **Stage 3** under Attendance Prosecution 444(1A).

Evidence required is detailed below and would not require the interventions as detailed above.

- Schools' complete on-line application form for 5 consecutive days unauthorised absence.
- Schools **MUST** provide
 - full name and address of parents to be issued an FPN. **It is a school decision as to whom should be issued with a FPN** (consideration of circumstances around the LOA should be taken into account).
 - copy of Parent Leave of Absence Application Form (if requested in advance)
 - copy of school letter informing parent that LOA has been declined*.
 - School letter informing parent that the LOA will evoke a FPN.
 - *School letter should make it clear that a Penalty Notice will be requested for unauthorised absence to the LA and that exceptional circumstances has been considered.*
 - Registration Certificate (on child returning to school) displaying the G code (unauthorised absence).
- If the criteria are not met, the LA will **not issue** a FPN.
 - Please note that contact with the school will not be made for further information if not provided at the initial referral stage.
- Enquiries regarding FPN's are to be made through Attendance@coventry.gov.uk.

*Schools need to ensure their letters are updated stating Attendance and Children Missing Education Team not Children and Family First Service, Education Entitlement Service, Targeted and Specialist Services or any other descriptor for the LA department.

Irregular Attendance (IA)

10 sessions (5 days unauthorised absence) in a 5-week period.

Stage 2 – Attendance 81% - 90%

- School may apply for a monitoring period as a first indicator that school attendance is becoming a cause for concern.
- Parent(s) will receive a formal warning of the possibility of an FPN being issued and a maximum of 20 school days to affect an improvement.
- An attendance target will be issued with the formal warning.

Stage 3 – Attendance 80% and below

- Schools must evidence that attendance has not improved following the monitoring period and has now dropped below 80%.
- Schools must complete an 'Attendance Intervention' form evidencing that an Early Help Assessment has been offered/taken and other interventions have taken place before any legal action or a 1A prosecution can begin.

APPENDIX iii. – Legal framework and court preparation

When evidence indicates that all avenues of support have been offered to effect a change to school attendance, the named Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) will:-

- Book a room (at the nearest family hub) to the family home address
- Complete an Advisory Letter for hand delivery to the home address
- Complete the PACE Interview documents
- PACE Interview (under Caution) will be undertaken by Senior Education Officer
- Court File will be prepared by LAAO for submission to Legal.