



Meopham School Attendance Policy

Equalities Statement

In our Trust we work to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all members of our community who hold a range of protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, as well as having regard to other factors which have the potential to cause inequality, such as socio-economic factors. For further information, please see our Equalities Policy.

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December 2025	Change of staff name

ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Meopham School is committed to providing an excellent education for students of all abilities. High attendance is essential for children to work to their potential, be successful and benefit from the opportunities available to them at their school. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly since high attendance is also a necessity in preparing them for their future life as a working adult.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance. Through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, we intend to

- Promote good attendance
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Promote and support punctuality to lessons
- Build relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school.

AIMS

- To raise attendance for all students, especially those who are disadvantaged, vulnerable or have attended less well in the past
- To promote the importance of attendance in improving the wellbeing, safeguarding and outcomes of all students
- To work collaboratively with families and local partners in the following way:

Expect	Aspire to high standards of attendance from all students, with the support of parents. To build a culture where all can and want to be in school, and ready to learn - by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
Monitor	Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
Listen and understand	When a pattern is spotted, discuss with students and parents to listen and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
Facilitate support	Remove barriers in school and help students and parents to access the support that they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include Early Help or a Family Plan where absence is a symptom of a wider issue.
Formalise support	Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences and ensure support is in place to allow families to respond. Depending on the circumstances, this could include formalising the support through an attendance contract or educational supervision order.
Enforce	When all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or being engaged with, enforce attendance through a statutory intervention; a penalty notice - in line with the National Framework, or prosecution to protect the students right to an education.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Poor attendance not only undermines a child's education and future life chances, but it can also put children at risk, encouraging anti-social behavior or activity that makes a child vulnerable. For our most vulnerable students, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and supported.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling. Regular absence will seriously affect their learning and has a negative impact on academic achievement. Any student's absence also disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning and progress of other students.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY EXPECTATIONS

It is our expectation that all students aim for 100% attendance; in addition, the government has set a minimum target of 95% attendance for all students. Anything below 95% attendance is a cause for concern.

students are also expected to arrive on time for school every day and be on time for all of their lessons. This means that all students should be in school before 8:35am ready to attend their first lesson that starts at 8:40am.

Student should remain in school until the school day ends at 3:10pm, having attended all of their lessons. To support students' punctuality each morning, the main school gates open at 8:00am and we run a breakfast club in the mornings in the canteen.

Even meeting the government target of 95% attendance leads to almost two weeks missed learning:

% of attendance in a school year	Number of days absent	Weeks missed	Lessons Missed
98%	4	Less than 1 week	24 lessons
95%	9.5	Nearly 2 weeks	57 lessons
90%	19	Nearly 4 weeks	114 lessons
85%	28.5	Nearly 6 weeks	171 lessons

LEGAL PARENTAL DUTY

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives a full time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have.

Parents have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Any parent who allows their child to be absent from school without an authorised reason creates an offence in law which may result in prosecution.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/carers are expected to

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time
- Contact the school by 8:30am on the first day of absence and on subsequent days on the dedicated attendance telephone number **01474 814646** or by emailing mss-attendanceofficer@swale.at

- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Communicate as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support
- Be aware of their legal responsibilities for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance
- Provide a reason immediately each time their child does not attend school and advise the school in advance of medical or other urgent appointments, which should not normally result in a full-days absence
- Take an active interest in their child's education and promote the benefits of regular attendance
- Attend all attendance improvement meetings and be willing to discuss poor attendance patterns and possible solutions

Parents should do everything possible to encourage their child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity. Allowing your child to be absent without taking any action is likely to make the situation worse and gives your child the impression that attendance does not matter.

For general attendance enquires, please contact the school's Attendance Officers using the mss-attendanceofficer@swale.at email address. If you would like to discuss any support needs relating to your child's attendance, contact should be made with the relevant Head of Year using the Communications Portal on the Contact Us page which can be accessed via the school website.

students are expected to

- Attend school every day on time
- Be prepared for the day with the correct equipment and uniform
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- Attend any meetings and engage in strategies around improving their attendance
- Tell their parents and staff at the school about anything that is affecting their attendance at school, including reporting bullying.

Governors are responsible for

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the Trust's policies and ethos
- Holding school leaders to account for the implementation of this policy
- Making sure school leaders fulfill expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the each school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The Headteacher (and Deputy Headteacher where responsibility is delegated) is responsible for

- The implementation of this policy in their school
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the School Governors, Executive Headteacher and Kent County Council

Mr McQuillan (Deputy Headteacher) has delegated responsibility for strategic oversight of attendance.

The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for attendance will

- Lead attendance across the school
- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes
- Have an oversight of data analysis
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

Miss Hodd (Assistant Headteacher) is the schools designated Senior Attendance Champion and has overall responsibility for the operational oversight of attendance. Miss Hodd can be contacted via the mss-attendanceofficer@swale.at email address.

Heads of Year and Raising Standards Leaders are responsible for:

- Working with the Attendance Officers to follow up on regular absences and lateness with students and parents to identify barriers and reasons for absence
- Reinforcing attendance and punctuality expectations in assemblies
- Promoting rewards and celebrating progress
- Applying rewards and sanctions consistent
- Identifying and mitigating potential barriers to good attendance in liaison with families and local partners

Form Tutors are responsible for:

- Reinforcing attendance and punctuality expectations in tutor time
- Promoting rewards and celebrating progress with their tutees
- Reviewing tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues and help set targets with students
- Engaging with parents and students to discuss any attendance concerns at the earliest opportunity

Attendance Officers are responsible for

- Monitoring the attendance email account and telephone line
- First Day contact procedures
- Collating and entering registration information as required
- Monitoring and recording holiday requests and other leaves of absence
- Making contact with parents regarding unexplained absences
- Working closely with Key Stakeholders to ensure good attendance
- Ensuring attendance records are accurate and up-to-date
- That parents are alerted if a student has not attended school and no contact has been made
- Analysing attendance data and providing reports to senior managers and other professionals
- Meeting with school staff, students and parents to establish the reasons for poor attendance and agreeing strategies and timescales to tackle any issues
- Preparing paperwork for referrals to the Local Authority
- Working with local partners as required
- Keeping records of all interventions and updating information on the schools Management Information System
- Contributing to initiatives that promote the importance of good attendance.
- Working with Heads of Year and Learning Leaders to identify and support students with poor attendance
- Conducting home visits with pastoral staff.

The Attendance Advisory Officer is responsible for: is responsible for

- Working closely with the school's attendance lead and Attendance Officers, and local partners over students at risk of Persistent or Severe Absence
- Overseeing referrals to the Local Authority
- Working closely with families when carrying out case work for students in the Persistent and Severe Absence categories and any students/students who are not succeeding because of their attendance

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a habit of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, students and all members of Meopham School staff. To maintain a focus on this, we will maintain regular contact with parents and carers regarding their child's attendance and report regularly on how their child is attending.

At Meopham School we have rewards and incentives to celebrate and promote children's

attendance with individual, class and whole school rewards based on weekly, termly and annual attendance. We know that every day matters and want to ensure that students are making the most of all the opportunities we provide them on a daily basis.

We do consider the circumstances of individuals and take them into account when rewarding children's attendance (for example, absences that are as a result of medical issues) to ensure that all children are rewarded fairly. However, we like to remind parents that the true reward of attendance will be seen in your child's progress, not only academically, but also socially, emotionally and through their personal growth.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING

We will monitor attendance and absence data weekly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level. We will also identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

As part of the new statutory requirements, whole school attendance data is automatically shared daily with the Department for Education and Kent County Council.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE DATA

Since poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early intervention is crucial. School staff will analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support. They will then use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families. In developing support strategies, they will also look into historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence.

Senior Leaders, Heads of Year and Form Tutors will receive regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with students and families. They will use the data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

TIERED APPROACH TO SUPPORTING ATTENDANCE

Some students find it harder than others to attend school and, at all stages of improving attendance, staff will work with students and parents to remove any barriers to attendance. To maximise support and ensure early intervention, students are placed in an attendance tier related to the number of days they have been absent from school and their risk of underachieving due to absence:

TIER	RISK OF UNDERACHIEVING	PERCENTAGE	DAYS ABSENT	ACTION	LEAD
1	LOW	96% - 100%	0 - 7	Promoting and rewarding good attendance	Form Tutors
2	INCREASING	91% - 95%	8 - 13	Initial School Support	Form tutors and Heads of Year
3	SERIOUS	85% - 90%	14 - 28	Escalated School Support & referral to External Agencies	Attendance Officers and Head of Year
4	CRITICAL	<85%	38+	Referral External Agencies & the Local Authority for statutory intervention	AHT / SEAAS and Local Authority

5	EXTREME	<50%	95+	Referral to the Local Authority for statutory intervention	Local Authority
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As part of our work to improve students' attendance and reduce absence, school staff will phone and write to parents, hold Attendance Improvement Meetings, conduct Home Visits and liaise with Early Help and Children's Social Services. For any students with attendance below 92%, the attendance team may invite parents/carers for a meeting to discuss the situation. If absences persist, they will refer the matter to South Eastern Attendance Advisory Service. (SEAAS)

On a case by case basis, the school will request medical evidence to verify a reason for absence. We encourage parents/carers to provide this evidence even if it has not been requested.

REDUCING PERSISTENT AND SEVERE ABSENCE

- **Persistent Absence** is where a student misses 10% or more of school i.e at least 4 weeks over the year.
- **Severe Absence** is where a student misses 50% or more of school. This equates to 19 weeks or 95 school days of missed learning during an academic year..

In the above cases, we will use attendance data to find patterns and trends of absence and carry out an audit to identify family, socio-economic or student-related barriers to good attendance.

Once identified, we will provide access to wider support services to help remove these barriers. We will hold regular meetings with parents and liaise and work with our attendance service and the Local Authority for additional support. We will also request Penalty Notices and other sanctions if support is not appropriate (e.g. for an unauthorised leave in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

Category	Support from School
AT RISK OF BECOMING PERSISTENTLY ABSENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proactively use data to identify students at risk of poor attendance ● Work with each identified student and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance ● Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance ● Invite parents to attend an attendance meeting with the Attendance Officer and / or Head of Year to identify additional support needs. ● Where necessary, involve outside agencies to provide support for improving attendance.
PERSISTENTLY ABSENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary, this includes working with partners ● Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future ● Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention ● Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care ● Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings
SEVERELY ABSENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue support as for persistently absent students ● Agree a joint approach for all severely absent students with the Local

students WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS OR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other student and therefore the attendance ambition for these students is the same as they are for any other student. However, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these students face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. Students with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as an alternative provision provided by the Local Authority.

For all students with SEND we will:

- Maintain a high ambition for attendance and work with students and parents to maximise attendance
- Ensure a joined up approach with the pastoral and SEN teams and, where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan
- If applicable, we will use the child's EHCP provision to help support improved attendance
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.

PART-TIME TIMETABLES

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a student's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A part-time timetable will only be in place for the shortest time necessary and will not be treated as a long-term solution. Any attendance support programme or other agreement will have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend full time, either at school or in an alternative provision. There will be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing the part time provision with the student and their parents.

SIXTH FORM

100% attendance is expected of all Meopham Sixth Form Students.

Poor punctuality and missed learning can have a severe negative impact on a sixth form student's achievements and destinations and, our data shows that when a student's attendance drops to between 80% and 90%, their final result is likely to be two grades lower than their potential result. Because of this, and the fact that we want to prepare our students for the world of work, we will address poor attendance in the same way as any employer would.

The Attendance Officer and Head of Sixth Form will monitor overall and lesson attendance for all Sixth Form students. In addition, pastoral staff, Form tutors and subject teachers will monitor their students' attendance and contact parents with any concerns they may have. Staff will work with students and their parents to provide interventions that should ensure high levels of attendance and achievement. Support interventions will include an Attendance and Punctuality Contract.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

We will keep an **attendance register**, and place all students onto this register. We will take this register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. The attendance register will record every student in one of the following categories:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent

We will also record:

- Whether an absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

[See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes]

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school is classified as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Registers are taken twice a day by staff to record attendance marks for each session. Registers are legal documents so school staff are obliged to complete them accurately. Attendance marks are also recorded in every lesson to monitor student punctuality and guard against internal truancy. Information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers. Attendance Officers can change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence, and vice versa, if new information is presented. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school, there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school that have an acceptable reason, agreed by the school. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent due to:

- Leave already granted by the school
- Sickness or any unavoidable cause - this must only relate to the child, not their parent or other family member.
- Medical/dental appointments that could not be arranged outside of school hours
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong.
- Failure by the Local Authority to provide transport
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

IN LAW THESE ARE THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE REASONS FOR A CHILD BEING ABSENT FROM SCHOOL

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. With unauthorised absence, the school does not agree that the reason given by a parent is acceptable. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised reasons include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- students who arrive at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time, unless an authorised school trip
- Oversleeping
- Absence to look after an unwell sibling/family member

- Inadequate uniform
- Confusion over term dates
- School refusal

UNPLANNED ABSENCE

Parents/carers must provide the school with a detailed reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by contacting school by 8:30am on the first day of absence and on subsequent days on the dedicated attendance telephone number or email:

01474 814646

mss-attendance@swale.at

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, we may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will also ask for medical evidence should absence due to illness go beyond five school days. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If we are not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

PLANNED ABSENCE

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance and provides evidence of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. We would expect a student to return to school after a morning appointment and come to school before an afternoon appointment unless agreed otherwise in advance.

FOLLOWING UP UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

Where we are not provided with a reason for a student's absence, we will:

- Send a text message to the student's parents in the morning of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason
- Phone the student's parents if we receive no communication following this text message
- Phone the student's emergency contacts if we are unable to make contact with the parent or carer
- Consider conducting a home visit or contacting the police/local authority if we continue to be unable to make any contact
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If an unexplained absence continues for 10 school days, the school will make a Child Missing Education (CME) referral to the Local Authority.

REPORTING TO PARENTS/CARERS

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via school reports. Parents also have access to the MCAS app where they can see their child's attendance and punctuality record.

GRANTING LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteachers discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable. Examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, or a housing crisis which prevents attendance. The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

We will consider each application for term-time absence individually and take into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. We will also want to weigh the above criteria against the child's record and educational progress to minimise the risk of any negative impact. We will take into account:

- Previous attendance
- Attainment and progress
- Ability to catch up on any work missed
- Any impending tests, exams or significant school events
- The frequency of any other requests for leave.

Formal requests for leave should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence and will respond accordingly.

LATENESS AND PUNCTUALITY

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day or lesson, they can miss vital work and information. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons for other students. Habitual poor punctuality will result in sanctions being applied e.g. detention, punctuality report and / or punctuality contract.

How we manage lateness:

- Students should arrive at school by 8:35am. At 8:40am the school day starts and students are expected to be in class at that time
- If a student arrives before the register has closed, they will be marked as late using the appropriate code
- If a student arrives after the register closes the U code will be applied to their attendance record which means they receive an unauthorised absence mark for the morning session. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a student has a persistent late record, parents/carers may be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer to resolve the problem. Parents/carers can approach the school at any time if they experience problems getting their child to school on time.

LEGAL SANCTIONS

The school or Local Authority can issue Penalty Notices for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. A Penalty Notice is issued to each parent, for each child and they must each pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority will consider prosecution.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160, with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.

If a third offence is committed, a Fixed Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court for prosecution. Prosecution can result in Criminal records and fines of up to £2,500. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

The Local Authority may also decide to put formal support in place such as an Education Supervision Order, or by intensifying support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are

safeguarding concerns, especially where absence is below 50%.

The Local Authority may also decide to prosecute parents when all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a Parenting Order, which means parents must attend parenting classes. Convicted parents also have to do what the court says to improve their child's school attendance in order to secure their engagement with support. In addition, parents may be fined up to £2,500, be given a Community Order or a jail sentence up to 3 months.

Penalty Notices can be issued by the Headteacher, Local Authority or the Police for.

- Overt truancy (including students caught on truancy sweeps)
- Absence of 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions (or 50 school days) – these do not need to be consecutive
- Unauthorised leave in term-time of 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) – these do not need to be consecutive
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the school register has closed)
- Where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours during the first five days of exclusion.

A Notice to improve letter can be issued by the School or the Local Authority. This letter sets out a period of time (3-6 weeks) during which time no unauthorised absence should be recorded. If an unauthorised absence is recorded during this period a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent*/carer per child).

*Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a **'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent, but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.** This includes:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION (CME)

Where a child is missing from education for 10 school days that are unexplained, or if a family moves away from the area or out of the country but does not register with another school, we will alert the Local Authority who will then take action according to the CME policy and procedures. Movement of children between local authorities and schools is tracked nationally.

RELATED GUIDANCE AND LEGISLATION

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024) [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118422/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance-2024.pdf)

School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures (2015)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80ce9740f0b623026959aa/School_attendance_parental_responsibility_measures_statutory_guidance.pdf

Children Missing Education (2016)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f5e4a40f0b6230268f135/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6650a1967b792ffff71a83e8/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Behavior in Schools (2024)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65ce3721e1bdec001a3221fe/Behaviour_in_schools_-_advice_for_headteachers_and_school_staff_Feb_2024.pdf

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England, including student movement (2023)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ef773513ae1500116e30db/Suspension_and_permanent_exclusion_guidance_september_23.pdf

Supporting students at school with medical conditions (2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-students-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

Equality Act 2010

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

The Education Act 1996, Part 6

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/444>

The Education Act 2002, Part 3

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) regulations 2013

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made>

Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-students-attendance-guidance-for-schools>

Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1136965/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Present

Authorised Absence

Unauthorised Absence

Not required to attend/not a possible attendance and does not affect attendance score

Code	Mark	Description/Notes
/		Present morning session -students must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration
\		Present afternoon session
#		Planned whole school closure
B		Attending any other approved educational activity (other than sporting activity or work experience). Offsite, but supervised by a member of staff
C		Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
C1		Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2		Leave of absence for a compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable
D		Dual register at another school
E		Suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision made
G		Holiday not granted by the school
H		DO NOT USE
I		Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J		DO NOT USE
J1		Absence to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
K		Attending education provision arranged by the LA School must record the nature of the provision
L		Late arrival before the register closes
M		Absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appt.
N		Reason for absence not yet established (holding code, code must be amended to the correct code within 5 school days)
O		Absent in other or unknown circumstances
P		Participating in a sporting activity, offsite but supervised by a member of staff
Q		Unable to attend school because of a lack of access arrangements
R		Religious observance
S		Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T		Parent travelling for occupational purposes
U		Arrived in school after the register had closed
V		Attending an educational visit or trip, must be arranged by school and supervised by a member of school staff
W		Attending an approved educational activity this is work experience, arranged by school or the LA.
X		Non-compulsory school age student not required to attend
Y		DO NOT USE
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 schools 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. School must record the nature of the unavoidable cause
Z		Prospective student not on admission register



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT!

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THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Take care of your physical health - Remember, the body and mind are intertwined. Have regular meals and discover a enjoyable exercise routine that fits your schedule and preferences.

Make sure to allocate some time for enjoyable activities or self-care - positive emotions can serve as a shield against stress.

Indulge in an activity that brings you joy - be it painting, playing music, or picking up a new sport.

Reach out to someone - confide in a trusted family member or friend about your emotions, or engage in an online conversation on a support platform; Childline or The Mix.

THINGS TO AVOID

Excessive consumption of caffeine, sugar, or other stimulants - can provide a temporary boost but may lead to increased stress in the long run.

Avoiding Overworking - Take the time to unwind by incorporating short, regular breaks into your study, work, or revision routine.

Pursuing perfection - can lead to unrealistic expectations. It's unfair to measure yourself, as a complete individual, against the selective social media highlights of someone else's life.

Excessive screen time - can disrupt your sleep. Remember to take breaks, avoid feeling the need to constantly engage in reading, watching, or playing activities.

Keeping emotions bottled up is not a solution - assuming they will disappear on their own can exacerbate the situation in the long term.

Support available

Action for Happiness - www.actionforhappiness.org

A non-profit organization that offers resources and evidence-based suggestions for actions to enhance happiness and support mental well-being on a personal level, in communities, workplaces, and schools.

Anna Freud Centre - www.annafreud.org | Tel: 02077 942313 | Email: info@annafreud.org

A charity focusing on children's mental health, providing specialized assistance, research, and training for children, youth, families, and schools.

Association for Young People's Health (AYPH) - www.YoungPeoplesHealth.org.uk

A charitable organization and membership platform dedicated to advancing the health and well-being of individuals aged 10-24.

Barnardo's - www.barnardos.org.uk

A leading children's charity that delivers services, research, and guidance on various issues affecting children's well-being, such as child poverty, sexual exploitation, disability, and domestic violence.

Charlie Waller Memorial Trust - www.cwmt.org.uk

Offers awareness, information, and resources for young people dealing with depression, along with training for families, schools, colleges, universities, workplaces, and GPs.

Childline - www.childline.org.uk | Tel: 0800 1111

A counselling service for parents, children, and young people, providing free and confidential assistance. It also offers multilingual support for South Asian communities in the UK, including Bengali/Sylheti, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, and English.

Family Links - www.familylinks.org.uk

Provides programs for parents of children from -9 months to 18+, equipping adults and children with skills for emotionally healthy lives, resilience, empathy, self-esteem, and positive relationships. Specialized programs cover parenting with Islamic Values, working with parents in prison, and supporting parents of children with disabilities or special needs.

Heads Together - www.headstogether.org.uk

An initiative to combat mental health stigma led by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

Hub of Hope - www.hubofhope.co.uk

A national database of organizations and charities, offering easy access to mental health support and advice from organizations of all sizes.

Support available

Kooth - www.kooth.com

Online chat-based support services for young individuals provided by qualified counsellors for free.

Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools - www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2

The Department for Education (DfE) has created a set of guidance and practical tools to assist schools in enhancing student mental health, identifying and supporting students with more complex needs, and making appropriate referrals to specialized agencies when necessary.

Mental Health Foundation - www.mentalhealth.org.uk

A UK charity committed to uncovering and addressing the root causes of mental health challenges. It offers information, research, resources, and a helpful A-Z glossary of mental health terms.

Mind - www.mind.org.uk

A national charity that delivers information, advice, and advocacy to promote and safeguard good mental health for all.

MindEd - www.minded.org.uk

A free educational resource on mental health for children and young people designed for all adults. MindEd for Families provides online guidance from trusted sources to help understand and address early issues and provide optimal support for children. It also offers e-learning resources for professionals and volunteers.

Mindfulness in Schools Project training courses - www.mindfulnessinschools.org/courses

A charity dedicated to promoting, supporting, and researching the teaching of secular mindfulness in schools.

MindUP - www.mindup.org/u-k

An educational program for teachers and students focusing on positive psychology and mindfulness.

The Mix - www.themix.org.uk | Tel: 0808 808 4994

A prominent digital support service covering various issues affecting the well-being of young individuals, including mental health, finances, homelessness, employment, relationships, and substance abuse. The website offers online chat support and a crisis messenger.

myHappyMind - www.myhappymind.org

A curriculum designed to help schools cultivate resilient children who value themselves and others, develop positive relationships, and flourish. It supports schools in fostering a positive and growth-oriented school culture.

Support available

Place2Be - place2be.org.uk

Provides counselling support to young individuals in schools, assisting them in handling a variety of complex social issues such as bullying, bereavement, domestic violence, family breakdown, neglect, and trauma.

Reading Well Books on Prescription - www.reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/young-people-mental-health

A selection of mental health books for 13-18-year-olds, accessible in local libraries. Offers guidance on topics like anxiety, stress, OCD, and challenging situations such as bullying and exams.

Rethink Mental Illness - www.rethink.org

A national mental health charity that aids individuals affected by severe mental illness in achieving a better quality of life through services, information, and support.

Rise Above for Schools - www.campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/rise-above/overview

Provides educational resources for teaching PSHE curriculum topics to KS3 and KS4 students, including flexible lesson plans, slide decks, and video content covering various well-being issues like bullying, cyberbullying, alcohol, exam stress, and body image.

Royal College of Psychiatrists - www.rcpsych.ac.uk

Offers accessible and well-researched mental health information for parents, teachers, and young people.

Samaritans - www.samaritans.org

A confidential emotional support service available 24/7 for individuals in the UK and Ireland experiencing distress or despair, including feelings that may lead to suicide.

Student Minds - www.studentminds.org.uk

A charity collaborating with students, professionals, and academics to enhance student mental health through information and support.

Switchboard - www.switchboard.lgbt

Provides confidential support and information for the lesbian, gay, bi, and trans community.

Time to Change - www.time-to-change.org.uk

An anti-stigma campaign by mental health charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, offering resources for combating mental health stigma and discrimination.

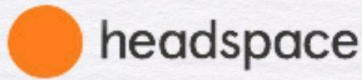
Winston's Wish - www.winstonswish.org.uk

Offers specialist child bereavement support services across the UK, including therapeutic assistance in various settings.

Young Minds - www.youngminds.org.uk

A UK charity dedicated to enhancing the emotional well-being and mental health of children and young people, as well as supporting their parents and carers.

Available Well-being Apps



HeadSpace

HeadSpace is an application offering guided meditation sessions and mindfulness training focusing on stress, anxiety, sleep, and various emotions. You can explore the trial features of the app for free.

Smiling Mind

Is a free app offering programs by psychologists for various age groups and specific settings like sports, education, and the workplace to manage stress and challenges.

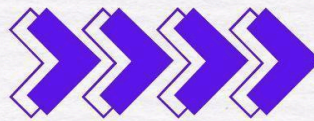


Self-Help Anxiety Management

SAM has been developed by a university team of psychologists, computer scientists & student users. The app lets users self-monitor anxiety and graph this. Users are encouraged to build their own Anxiety Toolkit of SAM resources and to draw on this for regular practice in managing anxious situations. The app is not text-heavy and highly visual.

Cove

Cove is an app that was designed for individuals who find it hard to express themselves verbally. In this app, young people can capture their mood or express how they feel by making music and storing it in a personal journal. Entire app is free.



thinkNinja

Think Ninja

Think Ninja is an app that educates 10-18-year-olds on mental health and well-being, addressing stress, anxiety, and low mood. It offers tools for resilience, guided by the Wise Ninja combining AI and psychology.

Stop Breathe and Think Kids

Users select how they feel upon opening the app. Depending on their choices, they are then given a 'mission' to launch. Each mission is a few minutes long and missions range from watching mindful cartoons, to being guided through relaxation exercises in the form of cartoons. Free app with options to purchase more.



Available Well-being Apps



Mood Tools

Mood Tools allows users to input their mood, watch helpful videos, keep a thought diary, choose activities to do and make safety plans.

Daylio

Allows users to keep a free private diary and capture their mood and day without having to write anything. All responses are made by clicking visual icons.



Daylio



Relax Melodies

An app designed to aid sleep. Users can create their own soundscape, add meditations or listen to a bedtime story.

KOOTH

Kooth is a free, online, anonymous well-being support community for young people. The kooth website allows you to access magazines for information, join a discussion, chat with a member of the team and keep a daily journal.



Catch it

Catch It was a joint app project between the University of Liverpool and University of Manchester. It is designed to help people capture their mood and create a diary. The idea behind the app is to turn your negative emotions into positive experiences.

Calm

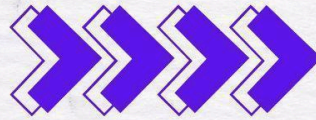
Calm is the perfect meditation app for beginners, but also includes hundreds of programs for intermediate and advanced users. Guided meditation sessions are available in various lengths between 5-25 minutes. The app also includes sleep stories to support sleep and breathing exercises.



Available Well-being Apps

Super-Stretch Yoga

Users have fun & get fit learning yoga poses from animated superhero characters. Go from start to finish or pick a pose, from up to 60 combinations. The app aims to teach breathing, play and mindfulness to children through yoga fitness.

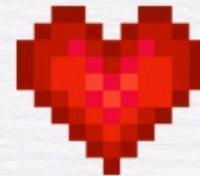


Plazma

A free app that acts as a virtual lava lamp to provide a visual, calming sensory stimuli. Users can simply watch the lava float or swipe their finger over the screen to manually move the lava around.

Sandbox Colouring

A mindfulness app offering virtual colouring by numbers. It provides free colouring pages for users to enjoy without purchasing any paid ones. Users can zoom in to colour by numbers and watch a video of their completed colouring.



Feeling Good Teens

A program for 10-15-year-olds to enhance self-esteem, resilience, and motivation. It includes 11 tracks focusing on relaxation, self-confidence, coping with stress, and improving sleep, using a blend of relaxation, positive psychology, and sports coaching techniques aimed at boosting core non-cognitive skills.

Clear Fear

An app which helps manage anxiety symptoms using Cognitive Behavioural techniques, developed collaboratively with young people. It targets anxious thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, includes anxiety presentations, resources, and a resilience section. Recommended for ages 11-19, but younger users can use it with adult support.



Disclaimer - These applications are not intended to be a replacement for treatment nor any sort of medical intervention.

Appendix 4: Summary of changes from August 2024

5 consecutive days of absence during term time

Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for Term Time Leave of 5 or more consecutive days.

Inset training days are school days and can be included in the 5 or more consecutive days where there was intent to be absent for term time leave.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

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

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years) The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)
The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.