



PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

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| Associated Policies: | Safeguarding & Child protection Policy Suspensions and Exclusions Policy Behaviour policy |
| Author/Owner: | School Improvement Leader |
| Date Approved: | 16 th July 2024 |
| Approved by: | Chief Executive Officer |
| Date issued: | 16 th July 2024 |
| Date of Review: | August 2027 |
| Website Inclusion | N |
| Version: | V1.3 24 |

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POLICY REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary if/when any changes are made to legislation that affect our Trust's practice. Otherwise, or from then on, this policy will be reviewed every 3 years and shared with the full Trust board.

This policy applies to pupils who have reached the compulsory school age.

1. INTRODUCTION

All Northampton Primary Academy Trust schools aim to encourage and assist pupils to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality. All NPAT Board of Trustees, Trust staff and members of the Local Governing Body (LGB) view regular school attendance as essential for all pupils if they are to maximise opportunities for each child to realise their true potential. We all aim to work in partnership with parents to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance.

Across the Trust, NPAT schools aim to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

We aim to emphasise the importance of, and secure, maximum attendance at school to enable pupils to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by:

- making explicit to all relevant parties the Trust's expectations for attendance levels
- promoting a consistent approach across the Trust to all matters relating to attendance
- clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance
- communicating to all relevant parties (staff, parents, pupils) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are authorised
- stressing the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance and building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

Regular attendance at school is vital. Without it, the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory; absence results in missed learning. It is a legal requirement that pupils of compulsory school age receive full-time education and this, with the exception of those educated at home or elsewhere, means regular attendance at school. Irregular attendance results in pupils not fulfilling their true potential, being placed at risk and being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. Therefore, we take the issue of attendance very seriously and do all we can to obtain very high attendance from all our pupils.

2. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK, LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance: [Working-together-to-improve-school-attendance](#) (19th August 2024) and [Parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance](#)

The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
 - Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
 - Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
 - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents> [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made>
- It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.

Absence from school will be authorised only at the discretion of the Headteacher based on their assessment of the situation and if it is for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance (ceremony only, not extended leave). This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement, and for the funeral service (not extended leave) or visitation for children in the care of the Local Authority (LAC)
- Holidays granted under exceptional circumstances and agreed by the Headteacher
- Time allocated visits to seriously ill relatives which cannot be scheduled outside of school time
- One day allocation to children of service personnel returning from long operational tours
- 'Reasonable' time to recover from family trauma or crisis
- Temporary time limited time table by agreement.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the continued professional development offer and that dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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, and/or authorising delegated staff to be able to do so

- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance.
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents.

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Lindsey York and can be contacted via telephone 01604 677970 or email Yorkl@easthunsburyprimary.org.

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Diane Beasley and can be contacted via telephone number 01604 677970 or email Beasleyd@easthunsburyprimary.org.

3.5 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendices), and submitting this information to the school office.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Teacher / Attendance officer where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

4. ABSENCE REASONS

Absence will be authorised at the discretion of the Head teacher.

4.1 Illness

Parents are expected to notify the school if a child is absent through illness in accordance with the guidance at section 10. An absence form must be completed.

4.2 Medical and Dental appointments – including Hospital and Opticians

Parents are expected to make every effort for appointments to take place out of school time. When this is unavoidable, parents must seek prior permission and may be asked to produce appointment confirmation. Parents are expected to restrict time to attend appointments to a minimum and where possible for the child to be returned to school as soon as possible that same day.

4.3 Days of religious observance (ceremony only, not extended leave).

Absence will be authorised when it is due to religious observance for up to one day per religious event. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. 'R' code will be used. Advance notice must be given in writing.

4.4 Exceptional family circumstances

4.4.1 Family bereavement

Parents are expected to notify the school where there is absence due to family bereavement. We understand how traumatic such an event can be for a family so appreciate that it may not be possible to follow the procedure as outlined in Section 8, however we would expect to be notified as soon as possible. Such absences will be authorised according to individual circumstances.

4.4.2 Funeral service

Parents are expected to provide advance notice to the school for absence to attend funeral service. Typically, one day absence will be authorised except where exceptional circumstances are found.

4.4.3 Families from other countries

We appreciate that occasionally it may be necessary following a bereavement for overseas families to make an extended visit home. Parents are expected to follow the above procedure and requests will be treated sympathetically.

4.4.4 Parental visitation for child in care / child in care of Local Authority

Absence will be authorised where parental visitation is required out of county.

4.5 Holidays granted under exceptional circumstances

Holidays during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances as outlined in the pupil attendance policy. We generally do not consider a need or desire for holiday or absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

4.6 Time allocated visits to seriously ill relatives (which cannot be scheduled outside of school time)

Requests for absence for visits to seriously ill relatives will be considered sympathetically and will be dependent upon individual circumstances.

4.7 Children of service personnel returning from long operational tours

One day absence will be authorised for children of service personnel returning from long operational tours where **advanced notice has been provided to the school in writing**

4.8 Family trauma or crisis

Parents are expected to notify the school where there is absence due to family trauma or crisis relating to an immediate family relative. Authorisation of absence will be considered to give the child 'Reasonable' time to recover for a period depending on individual circumstances.

4.9 A temporary, time-limited part time timetable

Where the school and the resident parent/carer of the pupil have agreed formally that the pupil should be temporarily educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend as part of that timetable.

5. EDUCATION OFF SITE

As well as the above leaves of absence, schools can allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities or to attend other schools or settings:

- To attend an offsite approved educational activity.
- To attend another school at which the pupil is registered (dual-registration).
- To attend provision arranged by the local authority. e.g. alternative provision or as part of an education, health and care plan.
- To participate in an approved sporting activity.
- To attend an educational visit or trip arranged by the school.

As these circumstances are part of delivering a full-time education they are not classified as absences for statistical purposes

6. WORKING TOGETHER – HOME SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Improving attendance across the Trust is the responsibility of everyone in each school community. Pupils, parents, governors and all staff.

The school expects all pupils to attend school no less than 96% of the time.

What we ask of pupils – all pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually. Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their class teacher, and if the need should arise, from the school pastoral team. At the end of each Autumn, Spring and Summer Term, pupils whose attendance is 100% or improved will be rewarded.

What we ask of parents/carers – Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and ready to

learn. Good sleep patterns, healthy eating and exercise all support good attendance and learning.

If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, parents are requested to notify the school on the first day of absence. If this does not happen, the school office will contact parents. Therefore, it is important that all personal details must be updated by parents. A pupil's absence from school will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received from the parent. Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance. Parents should avoid, if at all possible, making medical / dental appointments for their child during school hours. Holidays should not be taken in term time only and requests for term time holidays will not be authorised.

In return the school will – encourage good attendance and punctuality. The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. Attendance is the responsibility of all staff.

Schools will take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when making decisions.

7. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

It is a legal requirement that registers are taken at the beginning of a school session, morning and afternoon. It is also very important in the case of a fire or the evacuation of the school that there is an accurate record of which pupils are in the building. Registers are taken promptly by the class teacher twice a day, at the start of each session.

Registers will be kept electronically and every entry preserved in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered.

8. LATENESS PROCEDURES

If a child misses the register, lateness should be recorded at the school office as soon as the child arrives. Registers will close 30 minutes after the start of the session (in most schools this is at 9.30am for the morning session) Children arriving within those 30 minutes will be marked 'late before the register closes' and will officially be recorded as late for the session. Children arriving after the register has closed have to be marked as 'late after the register has closed' and will be officially marked as an unauthorised absence for that session, unless a valid reason is received (in which

case it would be authorised). If a child has a pattern of recorded late marks in any half term a letter will be sent home to parents.

Absence monitoring may also identify trends and patterns of lateness which may cause concern (eg: pattern of lateness on Mondays). Where this is identified the school will contact the parents to discuss the situation and where necessary may be required to inform the Local Authority.

9. FIRST DAY RESPONSE PROCEDURE

The school will make every effort to contact parents/carers who do not call the school to check the child's welfare and clarify the reasons for absence. Schools should take reasonable steps to check the accuracy of the register before contacting parents. Discretion should be used to ensure that vulnerable children or those with low attendance are prioritised when making contact. Where no successful contact is achieved a home visit will be completed and other agencies may be informed in order to safeguard the child.

10. NOTIFYING ABSENCE

Parents are expected to inform the school on the first day of absence by 9.00 am when registers are completed.

A telephone call will need to be made for every consecutive day of absence until a reason has been ascertained that can define the length of absence. A telephone message, email or a verbal message from an adult who has responsibility for the pupil is sufficient. In cases of written or verbal information the reason should be recorded. (Refer to appendices for list of attendance authorisation codes) If no reason is given for an absence, a Reason for Unexplained Absence letter may be sent asking for an explanation for the absence.

11. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Any absence that is not seen to be reasonable by the school will be deemed 'unauthorised' and recorded as such. This will apply to all absence without an acceptable reason.

12. EARLY DEPARTURES

Children who leave early – partway through the school day – must be 'signed out' at the school office detailing the time and reason

13. GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER ABSENCE

Children who are absent from school whilst travelling will be encouraged and supported to register in another school during their time away in order to ensure continuity of education. Ideally the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school.

Absence will be authorised when it is due to traveller cultural observance (as opposed to travelling) for up to one day per event.

Children from the traveller community whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school.

14. SCHOOL CLOSURE

In the event of an emergency school closure such as strike days, bad weather and other unforeseen events children will be marked with the 'enforced school closure' code so that this does not affect their personal attendance.

15. HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

Statutory guidance released by the DfE in August 2013 states that 'Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend together, including weekends and school holidays. Headteachers will rightly prioritise attendance.

The decision to authorise for absence for exceptional circumstance is at the Headteacher's discretion, following consultation with the NPAT Chief Executive Officer. The following reasons constitute exceptional circumstances in NPAT schools:

- up to 5 days funded by charitable organisations previously agreed or requested by the school.
- armed forces workers who are unable to gain leave during school holiday times. Written evidence must be presented.
- extended leave for cultural reasons where a family lives abroad (up to 10 days maximum).

Exceptional Holiday requests will not be considered for children whose attendance is below the historic National Average of 96% for primary pupils or for pupils who are in Year 6 until after their SATs have been completed in May.

Parents who take unauthorised holiday absence will be sent a holiday warning letter outlining the implications for the future.

Procedure for requesting holidays for exceptional circumstances:

- The Parents/Carers write a letter to the Headteacher and submit it at least two weeks prior to the holiday date. Parents/Carers should also make an appointment with the Headteacher or nominated Deputy, at this time, to discuss their reasons for considering a holiday during term time.
- The Headteacher will request 12-month attendance figures for the pupil(s) involved.
- Having met with the Parent/Carers, the Headteacher or nominated Deputy will make a decision based on the above criteria and inform Parents/Carers, within two working days of the meeting, in writing with details outlining the reason for the decision.

Where parents keep a child away longer than the period agreed, the additional days will be recorded as unauthorised.

16. MISSING FROM EDUCATION

If a child is absent from school for 10 consecutive days without any contact being made between home and school, the child will be reported as 'Missing from Education' and we will make an immediate referral to the School Attendance Support Service (SASS) for schools within the West/North Northants area or to Milton Keynes City Council (MKC) for schools within the Milton Keynes area. During the 10 days of absence, the school will make every attempt to contact the parents through all contact details which the school has on record and will ensure that a home visit has been made. After 20 school days the school will request that SASS/MKC remove the child from the school role.

In order to prevent children becoming 'missing from education' parents are requested to inform the school directly of their proposed move and complete a mid-year transfer form for signature by the Headteacher.

17. ABSENCE DUE TO MENTAL OR PHYSICAL ILL HEALTH/ SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES

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

Schools within Northampton Primary Academy Trust will work alongside families to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance.

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

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

18. REWARD SYSTEMS

All Northampton Primary Academy Trust schools offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. Each school's ethos will aim to demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.

Good attendance will be rewarded in each school on a regular basis.

19. ABSENCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Attendance data will be monitored and analysed regularly in order to identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support and inform policy / practise. A below 96% attendance sheet will be analysed regularly to identify patterns of concern. Where attendance is causing concern, the following procedures will be followed from mid-October onwards:

- Attendance falls below 96% - Initial Concern letter will be sent. (Appendix 2)
- Attendance continues to cause concern over a 10-week rolling period or deteriorates over 10-day period – Parent/carers will be invited to an attendance meeting. (Appendix 3)

- Attendance continues to cause concern over a 10-week rolling period or deteriorates over a 4-week (20 school day) period - Letter will be sent with an offer of an attendance Contract. (Appendix 4) Where the parent/carer does not attend, the attendance meeting will continue in absence. (Appendix 7)
- Where attendance has been monitored over a 10-week rolling period and no improvement is evidenced a referral will be made to the School Attendance Support Service (SASS)/ Milton Keynes City Council School Attendance (MKC)
- Where consultation with School Attendance Support Service / MKC has not improved the attendance, a referral will be made for consideration for a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution with supporting documentary evidence.

Absence monitoring may also identify trends and patterns of absence which may cause concern (e.g. pattern of Friday absences). Where this is identified the school will contact parents.

Attendance figures for the previous year are published in the school's prospectus. Parents will be given a report of their child's attendance for the school year with their child

20. PERSISTENT ABSENCE & IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE

The education Act 1996 Section 444 states:

Section 444(1) If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.

Section 444(1a) If in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1) the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause him to do so, he/she is guilty of an offence.

Any pupil who falls below 90% attendance will become a persistent absence pupil and therefore reported through every schools termly census.

Irregular attendance refers to a series of short absences where there has been an unsatisfactory explanation for the absence or no reason provided.

Where there is an ongoing concern regarding a child's absence and the school have been unable to secure improvements in attendance, a referral will be made to the SASS/MKC. Referrals to SASS/MKC may lead to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice or even prosecution.

Where a child is out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of ten school weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action. This could include,

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

21. ATTENDANCE CONTRACT

An attendance Contract is a formal written signed agreement between parents and a school within Northampton Primary Academy Trust and should contain:

- A statement by the parents that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are set out in the contract; and
- A statement by the school agreeing to provide support to the parents for the purpose of complying with the contract.

Attendance Contracts can be used in cases of irregular attendance at school. Attendance Contracts are voluntary but any non-compliance will be recorded by the school as it may be used as evidence in court. (Appendix 5)

22. PENALTY NOTICES / LEGAL ACTION

19.1 Penalty Notices

Penalty notices can be issued as an alternative to Magistrates' Court proceedings. Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Penalty notices may be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. Parents will be notified at the time of exclusion to which days this applies. Refer to NPAT Suspension & Exclusions Policy.

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

Penalty notice payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years

19.2 Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences

- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

19.3 Prosecution

Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.

Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment."

19.3 Managed moves

A managed move is a formal agreement between a child, their parents or carers and 2 schools. It allows a child to have a trial transfer to another school.

A managed move is not appropriate when:

- a parent is seeking a straightforward transfer to another school
- the child is not on a school roll
- the child would be unable to return to the home school if the placement is unsuccessful

Before requesting a managed move, the head teacher should be satisfied all reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the pupil's difficulties in school.

23. POLICY GUIDANCE: SUPPORTING EVIDENCE FOR SASS/MKC REFERRALS

When making referral to SASS/MKC the following documentation must be included in PDF format or image format;

- The school attendance policy

- The attendance certificate (only for past 6 weeks attendance from date of referral not including half terms)
- The registration certificate
- Any request for leave (holiday referral only)
- Any response to request for leave (holiday referral only)
- Any medical evidence in relation to the absence
- Any documented communication with parents/carers in relation to the absence
- Completed S9 witness statement (please select half term dates for any dates unable to attend court)

24. POLICY GUIDANCE: EXAMPLE LETTERS – APPENDICES

- All letters should be pasted onto school letter headed paper and edited accordingly.
- Letters should be sent by email and/or post.
- A copy of all letters should be kept on the pupil's file.
- Letters sent by email should be sent as a PDF attachment with a request for a read receipt.
- Consideration should be given to letters being sent by post being tracked.

25. POLICY GUIDANCE: CHECKLIST FOR PENALTY NOTICES

Before completing form

- Has the period for which the PN is requested been recorded as unauthorised?
- Are there any missing marks or coding irregularities?
- Does coding on the register accurately reflect the dates for which the PN is being requested?
- Is the reason for the request indicated on the form (e.g. unauthorised holiday or unauthorised absence)?
- Have the parents or carers been informed that they could receive a PN?

Criteria for issuing a penalty notice

- 5 days or more continuous absence
- Can be used as a sanction for irregular attendance. A PN may be used in this instance where a pupil accumulates 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 6-week period

26. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

27. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Local Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The NPAT Board of Trustees monitor attendance across the Trust on a termly basis for each individual school and the Trust as a whole.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the LGB and Chief Executive Officer.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Monitors attendance safeguarding concerns

Appendix 1 **Holiday absence reply**

Dear [NAME]

Thank you for notifying the school that [PUPIL NAME] will be absent from school from [DATE] for a family holiday. We understand that a family holiday is important, however, to take time of school during term time is unacceptable. Please be aware, [PUPIL NAME] absence for this period will be unauthorised.

As you may be aware in 2012 the government published changes to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**. These amendments to the rules regarding children's attendance at school came into effect from September 2013.

'Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of **five school days**. The amendments make clear that headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted' (DfE Apr 13).

If a child is absent without permission (absence of 5 days or more within a given period) a penalty notice **could** be issued by the Local Authority which must be paid within a prescribed period. Failure to pay the penalty could lead to prosecution.

Please see the DfE website for official guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Unfortunately, we do not deem a family holiday during term time to be an exceptional circumstance. You also need to be aware that as a result of this absence their attendance may fall below our monitoring threshold of 96% and you will receive letters to notify you of this at given monitoring points.

If you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter, then please contact the Office to speak to me.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 2 Initial concern letter

[Name of Parent/Carer]

[Address]

[Postcode]

[Date]

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

Regarding the attendance of [Pupil(s) name]

I am writing to make you aware that since the start of term your child's attendance has fallen below the 96% attendance target that all schools work to.

Please note that this letter is for your information only, so that you know that your child's attendance is being monitored. You do not need to respond to the school at this stage.

I am writing to ask for your support in raising this level back to the 96% that the school is expected to achieve.

[Pupil(s) first name] attendance is currently below this target at [Pupil(s) attendance]

We are aware that [Pupil(s) name] may have missed school due to illness but it is important that they attend school every day to avoid further impact on their attendance.

I will continue to monitor [Pupil(s) name] attendance and expect to see improvement. Please be advised that any future absences may be unauthorised unless supported by medical evidence e.g. appointment card

If you would like to discuss this with myself or our Family Support Worker further, please feel free to contact the office to make an appointment.

I thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Headteacher

Copy to: Pupil file

Appendix 3 Request to attend attendance meeting.

[Name of Parent/Carer]

[Address]

[Postcode]

[Date]

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

Regarding the attendance of [Pupil(s) name]

I am writing to you with concerns about [Pupil(s) name] attendance at school. Since the beginning of the academic year, [Pupil(s) name] attendance has fallen to [add percentage] % and this is significantly below the government recommendation of 96%.

I would appreciate it if you could meet with [Attendance Officer name] on [date/time] for an informal chat so that we can see if there are any ways in which we can help you to improve [his/her] attendance. One of our Family Support Workers, [Enter Name] will also be present for any additional needs or requests that you may have.

Please be aware that under Section 444 a person is guilty of an offence for failing to secure regular school attendance of their child, if their child is of compulsory school age and is a registered pupil at a school. Legal action against you may result in either:

- A Penalty Notice with a potential fine of up to £160 fine per child.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or imprisonment.

If you are unable to attend this appointment please contact the school office to arrange an alternative appointment.

We look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Headteacher

Copy to: Pupil file

Appendix 4 **Offer of Attendance contract meeting**

[Name of Parent/Carer]

[Address]

[Postcode]

[Date]

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

Regarding the attendance of [Pupil(s) name]

I am writing to you with my continuing concerns about [Pupil(s) name] attendance at school.

Over a period of 10 weeks, [Pupil(s) name] attendance has fallen to [add percentage] %

I would like to invite you to attend a meeting on [date/time] to discuss [pupils name] attendance. The aim of this meeting is to explore the continuing reasons behind his/her irregular attendance at school and to discuss setting an attendance contract. Please be aware that this meeting will be held in your absence if you fail to attend. You will be sent a copy of the notes after the meeting.

A leaflet outlining the Attendance contract process is enclosed for your information.

Whilst your involvement in an attendance contract is voluntary, I must remind you that under Section 444 a person is guilty of an offence for failing to secure regular school attendance of their child, if their child is of compulsory school age and is a registered pupil at a school. Legal action against you may result in either:

- A Penalty Notice with a potential fine of up to £160 fine per child.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or imprisonment.

I hope that you will work with us to improve [pupils name] attendance and therefore avoid the need for legal proceedings to be implemented.

Should you have any special requirements please do not hesitate to contact the school office so that arrangements can be made prior to our planned meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Headteacher

Copy to: Pupil file

Appendix 5 Attendance Contract meeting information

Attendance Contract meeting information

What is an attendance contract meeting and what is it for?

This is a meeting for those involved with your child's school attendance. It will consider why attendance is so low and set targets for improvement.

Why have I received this leaflet?

Because your child's attendance has fallen below 95%, which is the same as missing one day in 5 and over the course of a child's education, this would mean missing approx. **3 years education**.

Who will be present at the meeting?

You, your child/children if invited, the school's attendance officer, family support worker and possibly the headteacher. Occasionally a social worker or other professional who knows you may attend.

What will happen?

You and your child/children will be encouraged to explain why their school attendance is low. Be honest – the meeting aims to find solutions and to avoid any court action by working together.

How will I know what is agreed?

You will be asked to sign a written attendance contract, stating what actions to be taken, who is to do what and when. You will receive a copy of the agreement which will include a date at which attendance will be further reviewed.

How many meetings will I attend?

One attendance meeting followed by a review. If attendance targets are not met and there is reason to believe that an offence has been committed, you may be asked questions under a formal caution at a second meeting.

From the date of the first meeting, all absences will be recorded as unauthorised unless a medical certificate or other supporting evidence is provided and agreed by the headteacher.

Remember we are here to support and help and want to work with you to improve your child's attendance.

Appendix 6 Attendance meeting form

Name of pupil..... Class..... Date.....

Parents name's..... Attendance.....

| Please tick as appropriate | Yes | No | Please tick as appropriate | Yes | No |
|------------------------------|-----|----|-----------------------------|-----|----|
| 1) Alleged bullying | | | 5) Peer/staff relationships | | |
| 2) Medical | | | 6) Academic | | |
| 3) Home related difficulties | | | 7) Behaviour/attitude | | |
| 4) Transport | | | 8) Community/others | | |

Details of areas of concern:

Actions agreed (please detail below) Attendance target set %

Signature of parents..... Name..... Date

School attendance officer..... Name..... Date

School FSW..... Name..... Date

Appendix 7 Missed meeting

[Name of Parent/Carer]

[Address]

[Postcode]

[Date]

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

Regarding the attendance of [Pupil(s) name]

It is disappointing that you did not attend the meeting you were invited to on [date/time]. As you are aware from the invitation letter, the aim of the meeting was to discuss improving attendance. In your absence we discussed our concerns of your child's low attendance and the need for it to improve to 96% over the next 6 weeks. We will continue to monitor the attendance and expect to see an improvement.

A copy of the attendance contract is enclosed with this letter. You should contact the school office within 5 school days from receipt of this letter to rearrange a meeting if you disagree with the conditions set.

If your child's attendance does not improve over the next 6 school weeks and the reasons given are not satisfactory, a referral will be made to our School Attendance Support Service/ Milton Keynes City Council School Attendance, who may take legal proceedings against you under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, for failing to secure the regular attendance of your child at school.

We hope that we can work together to improve your child's attendance and therefore avoid the need for legal proceedings to be implemented.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Copy to: Pupil file

| | | | |
|---|--|--------------|--|
| EHA offered ? (If so, give details) | | | |
| AGREED ACTIONS | | | |
| | | | |
| Attendance Target start date: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical evidence to authorise absences (appointment cards / hospital letters etc) • • • ... | | | |
| Review Date | | School | |
| Parent's signature | | Other agency | |
| Staff signature | | Date | |
| Headteacher signature | | | |

Appendix 9 PACE interview information

PACE Interviews

Advice for Parents and carers

Why have I received this leaflet?

You will have already been invited to attend an Attendance Contract Meeting because your child's school attendance has fallen below 92% over a period of 10 school weeks.

If you attended this meeting, a Parent Contract will have been drawn up to improve your child's attendance to an acceptable level as agreed with you. Any attendance contract made specifies a date to review the child's attendance which is agreed with the parent(s). If, by this date the child's attendance reaches the agreed target then a Parent Review Meeting will be held. However, if the agreed attendance target is **not** met then the review meeting will be held as a **formal PACE interview**.

If you have made an attendance contract it is therefore very important that you make regular checks with the school's Attendance Officer about your child's attendance and carry out any actions you agreed to in the attendance Contract.

If you fail to attend a Parent Contract Meeting you will be invited to attend a formal PACE Interview.

What is a Formal PACE Interview?

A PACE Interview is a meeting held under formal caution to consider if an offence has been committed in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

Where a child's attendance at school remains irregular, the LEA must consider whether to commence legal proceedings under either the Children Act 1989 or the Education Act 1996.

What does this actually mean?

The Education Entitlement Officer will want to ask you some questions at the interview, and you will be cautioned as follows:

You do not have to say anything, but it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned, something, which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence.

You do not need to say anything, and you will not be under arrest. You may bring with you a friend or legal advisor for support or advice. If you wish to do so, please ensure that person attends with you.

Who will be at the PACE Interview?

The meeting will be chaired by an Education Entitlement Officer and will include you, and your friend, representative or advisor you bring for support. Your child will not be required to attend.

What will happen at the Formal PACE Interview?

The Education Entitlement Officer will caution you. If you agreed an attendance contract this will be reviewed with you. In all circumstances they will ask you a series of questions and if there is anything further you wish to add to explain why your child's school attendance is so irregular. Be honest, as the Senior Education Welfare Officer will also need to record any defence or mitigation that you may offer.

You will be asked to sign a written summary of the meeting, stating that it is accurate and that it has been taken under caution.

How will I know what happens next?

After the PACE interview your case will be reviewed by an Education Entitlement Officer (Prosecutor) who will make a decision whether to commence legal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court. You will receive written confirmation of their decision as soon as possible after the PACE interview.

If it is appropriate in your case, you may be offered the option of paying a Penalty Notice instead of facing a Criminal Prosecution in Magistrates' Court. (Acceptance of a Penalty Notice does not result in a criminal conviction). If you are offered the opportunity to pay a Penalty Notice you will receive written confirmation of this with full information and details of how to pay the Penalty Notice.

Please remember that if your child's attendance improves to the agreed level and is sustained following the Attendance Contract Meeting then no legal action will be taken against you.

We believe that your child's education is vital to their future prospects. We all need to work together to make sure they do as well as they can. Encourage and support your child's attendance at school.

Appendix 10 **Attendance codes**

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

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|--|---|--|
| / | 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 |
| Attending a place other than the school | | |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| V | Attending an educational visit or trip | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school |
| P | Participating in a sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| W | Attending work experience | Pupil is on an approved work experience placement |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity | Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| Absent – leave of absence | | |
| C1 | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| J1 | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| S | Study leave | Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination |
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| C2 | Part-time timetable | Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| C | Exceptional circumstances | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| Absent – other authorised reasons | | |
| T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health) |
| E | Suspended or excluded | Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made |
| Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause | | |
| Q | Lack of access arrangements | Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school |
| Y1 | Transport not available | Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the |

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|--|
| | | transport normally provided is not available |
| Y2 | Widespread disruption to travel | Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency |
| Y3 | Part of school premises closed | Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open |
| Y4 | Whole school site unexpectedly closed | Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather) |
| Y5 | Criminal justice detention | <p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention |
| Y6 | Public health guidance or law | Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law |
| Y7 | Any other unavoidable cause | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes |

| Absent – unauthorised absence | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| G | Holiday not granted by the school | Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school |
| N | Reason for absence not yet established | Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes |
| O | Absent in other or unknown circumstances | No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence |
| U | Arrived in school after registration closed | Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session |
| Administrative codes | | |
| Z | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered |
| # | Planned whole-school closure | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays |