Northlands Primary School

One Community – Many Cultures – Achieving Together

Attendance and Punctuality Policy
September 2026

This policy meets the requirements of, and includes information from the updated statutory school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), entitled 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', and applies from 19th August, 2024 and onwards, which schools, trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities must have regard to as part of their efforts to maintain high levels of attendance.

1. Introduction and Aims

At Northlands Primary School we value the attendance of each and every pupil. Attendance, like safeguarding is everyone's business, and is also the responsibility of everyone, from the Chair of Governors, and members of the governing board, Headteacher, teachers, teaching assistants, support/pastoral staff, as well as anyone who works directly with the children on roll at Northlands primary school.

"Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be, and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance, is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn" (DfE, 2024). Therefore, we expect all children on roll at Northlands to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

Children are expected to attend school regularly, punctually, and prepared for the day. However, we understand that some pupils find it harder to attend than their peers, and we will make the best provision we can for those children, who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided (DfE, 2024).

Good school attendance can only be achieved if viewed as a whole school approach and ethos, and through working together with families and the wider community to prioritise attendance improvement. One of the most effective ways that school can improve achievement is by improving attendance. Even the very best teachers struggle to raise the standards of children who are not in school regularly. Schools that relentlessly pursue good attendance also get better overall attainment and behaviour, and positive outcomes.

We expect our children's' attendance to be at least 96%.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school, and the provision of a welcoming learning environment where school celebrates its learners. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

Aims

- Ensure we regularly promote good attendance and punctuality to pupils, and that it remains a high profile across school, and with parents/carers.
- To regularly monitor, identify barriers to attendance and punctuality for individual pupils.
- To work collaboratively and in partnership with pupils, and parents/carers, to remove any barriers to attendance
- Build trusting relationships with pupils, parents/carers, and work together to identify and put the right support in place to improve attendance.
- We will use a range of strategies and procedures to address attendance and punctuality issues, and will promptly investigate any absenteeism, liaising closely with parents about this.
- To provide a consistent, preventative, responsive and supportive approach to attendance.
- We will also recognize, acknowledge, and celebrate good attendance, and improvements in attendance for whole classes, and for individual pupils, and thank parents/carers by letter.

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; as attendance runs through all aspects of school improvement, which is supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Parents responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude; to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. Parents/carers and guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.

Section 576 Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

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

"Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that 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" (DfE, 2024).

Under the new DfE statutory guidance, parents are expected to:

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

If a child of compulsory school age fails to regularly attend the school which he/she is registered at, then the parent/guardian is guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Schools responsibilities

Everyone has a contribution to making a positive difference and contributing to a whole school strategy and approach to attendance. Improving attendance is a school leadership issue, and we have a designated Senior Attendance Champion (Headteacher), who has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. The Senior Attendance Champion (Headteacher) will establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence, and make sure they are followed by all staff, and will regularly monitor and evaluate progress concerning attendance, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.

Role	Name
Head Teacher/Senior Attendance Champion	Lewis McGee
Deputy Head Teacher	Helen Soderstrom
Attendance admin - School office	Debbi Porter and Alison Crabbe
Local Authority Caseworker	TBC

On a day-to-day basis concerning reporting absence, parents/carers should contact the school office staff Debbi Porter (PA to Headteacher and HR Manager at Northland's Primary School), and Alison Crabbe (School Business Manager. The trusted adults who pupils can talk to in school about why they are absent and any barriers they are facing, include; their class Teacher, their class Teaching Assistant, the
Deputy Head, and Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion.

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Governors
The link governor reviews 3 times a year the behaviour attitudes and attendance in line with the School Development Plan. The Governors take an active role in attendance improvement, support the school to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. The school Governors will;

- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance
- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it. We will also ensure all staff working directly with, or supporting improved attendance, understand their role, and has the right level of training to undertake the key requirements essential for that role.

3. Northlands attendance and punctuality expectations of pupils and parents

All pupils are invited to arrive at school from 08:40, with registers being taken and the school day starting at 08.55. The school day ends at 15:15pm. If a child is not present at this time they will be marked as **late (L code)** when they do arrive. If a child arrives in school after 09:00 without a valid reason, then they are marked as late after registration has closed and therefore sustain an unauthorised absence mark **(U code)** which will count as absent for that school session.

	AM Session	**PM Session**		
		Reception	**Years 1 /5**	**Year 6**
Registration	**08:55**	**12:45**	**13:00**	**13:15**
Close of Register (unauthorised late)	**09:00**	**12:55**	**13:10**	**13:25**

All pupils arriving late must sign in at the School Office and reasons for lateness are required for the school records. It is essential that all children arriving or leaving school with a parent / guardian outside the normal school hours are signed in / out from the School Office. This signing in / out system is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

Punctuality

Punctuality is vitally important and is a life skill that reaches into employment in later life. When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Pupils may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom where everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher, therefore everyone's education is compromised. Pupils who are in school every day find learning more satisfying and manage the demands of the school day in a more positive way. School staff will routinely discuss the importance of punctuality with pupils, and parents/carers, and the Attendance Lead will phone parents/carers to discuss punctuality concerns regarding their child, and send letters to parents/carers about punctuality.

4. Daily Routines for reporting absence

- **Parents (not family friends or siblings) are expected to telephone the school office (01788 542440), by 08:45 on the morning of the day of absence** to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state the reason for absence and the expected date of return.

- **If no message** has been **received regarding** the **reason for the absence by 9:30am**, the **School Office will send** a **text message to the parent or guardian informing them of their child's absence, and requesting a reason for absence.**
- **If no contact** has been **made by the parent regarding the reason for a child's absence by 10:30am**, the **School Office will telephone the parent or guardian** in order **to check the safety of the child and seek a reason for absence. A welfare home check may be carried out.**
- **Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours**. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment. Northlands ask parents to inform the School Office the day before any appointments. Northlands will only request reasonable medical evidence in cases where we need clarification to accurately record absence in the attendance register, or where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.
- In the unlikely event of a child's absence where the School Office is unable to reach a parent or guardian by 10:30, emergency Safeguarding procedures will be taken by the Headteacher. Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of safeguarding. Absence can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues. The Headteacher/Deputy Head will contact Warwickshire Attendance Service, social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Daily attendance is displayed outside the main office as a whole school and a breakdown of individual class attendance. **Wrap around club is offered and ran by Multi Super Star Sports.**

5. Types of Absence

By law all schools are responsible for taking the attendance register twice a day; once at the start of each morning session, and once during each afternoon session. Where a pupil is recorded as absent, we must record the reason the pupil is not in school by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (DfE, August 2024). See appendix 3.
Only the Headteacher or designated member of staff have the authority to **authorise** or **unauthorize** absences.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for an acceptable reason, such as illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable causes. It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In most cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested. School will challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance. It is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness. School will follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. We can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes.

Unauthorised absences are when a pupil is absent without prior authorisation from the school and/or when no justifiable reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer or guardian (including when parents have failed to provide a reason despite attempts to establish a reason by the school). This type of absence could lead to the school referring to the Local Authority and/or increasing the level of support offered to improve attendance.

- It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In most cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern.
- In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested.
- School will challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance. It is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

School will follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. We can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes.

6. Leave of absence

- ·The law states a leave of absence may only be granted by a school if an application is made in advance and if it considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Expectations

- A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. Permission for a Leave of Absence from a school may only be given by a person who the school's proprietor has authorised to do so (an authorised person).
- Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.
- Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.
- Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school.
- When making an application for Leave of Absence parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify the parents of their decision. The school may also request further information on the application and supporting documentation where appropriate.
- It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is their responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Where applications for Leave of Absences are made in advance and refused, the child is expected to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an "unauthorised" absence. Where a leave of absence is requested but additional days take either prior to or after the request, they may be considered as part of the leave of absence.
- Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council. Penalty notices are issued in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices and in the first instance, as an alternative to prosecution proceedings.

- ·Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Leave of Absence taken in the academic year 2026-2027

- The law relating to Penalty Notices changed with effect from 19 August 2024. Therefore, Penalty Notices issued for Leave of Absence taken from September 2024 will be issued in accordance with the updated legislation.
- Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices – 4 in total).
    - First Leave of Absence Offence: The amount of £160 to be paid within 28 days, this is reduced to £80 each child if paid within 21 days.
    - Second Leave of Absence Offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): The amount of £160 paid within 28 days. No reduced amount.
    - Third Leave of Absence offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice). A Penalty Notice will not be issued and the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

7. Persistent absence (PA) and severe absence (SA)

Persistent absence is when a pupil misses 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Severe absence is when a pupil misses 50% or more of school attendance, throughout the school for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence**.** There are of course, good reasons (especially illness), which make attendance at school sometimes difficult. Nevertheless, lessons missed cannot be repeated and 'catching up' on work is never as good as the original learning experience. Pupils with persistent absence are often unlikely to attain their full potential at school and are at risk of failing to stay in education after leaving. Severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school, or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance, and so are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners (DfE. 2024). Ensuring that attendance improvement is prioritised and strategies and action plans are put in place for pupils with persistent and severe absence is crucial to safeguarding and improving pupils' overall welfare in both the short and long term.

8. Northlands Staged Approach to the management of Attendance

Northlands Primary school monitors the attendance and punctuality of all pupils on a weekly basis and uses a staged approach to respond to and address barriers to attendance and punctuality. The whole school attendance target is based on an evaluation of the last 3/5 years previous attendance. Attendance is more closely evaluated of pupils whose attendance is below the whole school target.

Stage	Trigger	Outcome
Admin	Child has been off for 5 days.	Office staff will contact (email, text, phone) a parent/carer after the first 5 days of absence to draw their attention to the days missed from school and the potential impact of missed learning. For unauthorised absence, office staff will inform the Headteacher and Attendance Lead.
Attendance Lead	Child has been off for 7 days.	Parents/carers will be invited in for an attendance meeting. (support/action plan will be completed). Barriers to attendance, and support options will be explored and discussed. Meeting held with Attendance Lead. Support/action plan will be shared with Headteacher (Senior Attendance Champion).
Attendance Lead Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion	Child has been off for 10 days.	Parents/carers with will be invited in for an attendance meeting. An action/support plan will be completed by the Attendance Lead. Barriers to attendance, and support options will be explored and discussed. Meeting held with Attendance Lead and Headteacher (Senior Attendance Champion).
Attendance Lead Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion	Child has been off for 12 days.	Parents/carers will be invited in for an attendance meeting. Barriers to attendance, and support options will be explored and discussed. An action plan will be completed by the Attendance Lead and the meeting will be held with the Headteacher (Senior Attendance Champion) and Attendance Lead. The Headteacher will also consult with the local authority's school attendance team.
Attendance Lead Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion	Child has been off for 15 days.	Parents/carers will be invited in for an attendance meeting. An action plan will be completed by the Attendance Lead, and the meeting will be held with Headteacher. Barriers to attendance, and support options will be explored and discussed. The Headteacher (Senior Attendance Champion) will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent and unable to attend because of sickness, and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness.

Where the absence is recorded as an unauthorised leave of absence, namely a holiday in term-time, the school's admin team, and the Headteacher will inform the local authority's school attendance team, and follow the legal framework/intervention process.

9. Support, and process to improve attendance

Throughout the staged process outlined in the table above, we will build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listen to, understand, be supportive, challenge, and address barriers to attendance. We will:

- Support parents and pupils by working together to identify and address any in-school barriers to attendance, along with identifying and finding supportive routes to improving attendance, including pastoral support, and considering reasonable adjustments in school.

- We will work with pupils, and parents/carers to provide support to remove barriers to attendance by building stronger relationships, and putting the right support in place at the right time, including the early help assessment, and working with external partners to provide support for the pupil/family.
- Discuss support with parents/carers and pupils where barriers are beyond the school's control, and signpost them to the right voluntary support, wand we will gain parents, carer, pupils voice prior to referrals to services and organisations.
- Meet with pupils, their parents or carers who are at risk of persistent or severe absence at the earliest opportunity, in order to understand the barriers to being in school. An attendance action plan with parents/carers, and agree actions or interventions to address the barriers to attendance. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support.
- Regularly discuss and review these actions with pupils, parents, and families.
- Where improvements are made we will acknowledge this by sending a thank you letter to parents/carers. Monitor the impact of any interventions, and make reasonable adjustments where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family.
- Action plans completed in attendance meetings will be shared with the Headteacher, pupil's class teacher, and referred to in meetings with the Attendance Caseworker from Warwickshire Attendance Service.

Additional Support

We recognise and understand that pupils can be absent from school due to mental or physical ill health, or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and that they may find it harder than others to attend school, and will need targeted or specialist support. See pages 12 and 13 of this policy for further details and information about additional support and alternative provision for pupils who have mental or physical health, special educational needs and/or disabilities. The Emotionally Based School Avoidance ('EBSA Pathway') in Warwickshire seeks to respond to the growing number of children and young people who experience emotional challenges in attending school.

10. How school will respond to and manage persistent and severe absence

- During the attendance meetings, for barriers that are individual to the pupil, support may include mentoring, 1-2-1 tuition, out of hours learning, provision of pastoral support, or an education, health and care plan, or alternative provision.
- Where the needs are wider and a family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment.
- Where engagement with support is proving more challenging, we will hold more formal conversations with parents/carers (and pupil where they are old enough to understand). These meetings will include the school's Attendance Lead, and Senior Attendance Champion (Headteacher), and a point of contact in the local authority's School Attendance Support Team. These meetings with will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family, and the potential need for legal intervention in the future. These meetings will also provide an opportunity to continue to listen and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid these consequences.

11. Formalising Support and legal interventions: Warwickshire Attendance Service

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with, in a rolling 10-week rolling period, the school's senior attendance champion (Headteacher) will work with the local authority to:

- Put formal support in place in the form of an attendance contract or an education supervision order.
- Issue a Notice to Improve and/or penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour.
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
- Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

"Where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful or are not appropriate (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time), the local authority's school Attendance Support Team should liaise with school and the early help lead practitioner or social worker (where applicable) to take forward attendance legal intervention to formalise support and/or enforce attendance" (DfE, 2024).

- The School is responsible for liaising closely with the Local Authority's Warwickshire Attendance Service and we will follow their standard approaches in managing attendance issues.
- Where all voluntary support options have not been successful, or have not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.
- Warwickshire Attendance Service can use the following legal interventions/formalised support; Attendance Contracts, Notice to Improve, issue of Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders, Attendance Prosecution, consideration of application of Parenting Orders.
- Warwickshire Attendance Service will decide which intervention will be most appropriate, however only after considering the individual circumstances of a family.
- The voluntary support options are not appropriate for an unauthorised Leave of Absence in term time.
- Prosecutions for non-school attendance must be conducted in line with the Warwickshire County Council Non-school attendance and Penalty Notice code of conduct and the Code for Crown Prosecutors and must pass the evidential and public interest tests.

Penalty Notices

- The threshold for a Penalty Notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 weeks. 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 (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).
- The Department of Education statutory guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', which applies from the 19th August 2024, states; "A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences. They should usually only be issued to the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence)" (DfE, 2024).

When schools are aware the threshold has been met for issuing a penalty notice, they will consider the following first, and decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case:

• Is support appropriate in this case? If yes, schools are expected to continue with the existing support without a penalty notice or issue a Notice to Improve if that support is not working or is not being engaged with.

Support is defined as any activity intended to improve the pupil's attendance, not including issuing a penalty notice or prosecution. Schools will consider what suitable forms of support are currently available in school and where necessary from other services and agencies in the area, and then decide whether any of those things are appropriate in the individual cases, and for those that are appropriate, whether they have been provided previously or could be provided now instead of taking legal action.
A penalty notice can be issued if either has not worked.

If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued subject to the other conditions below.
• Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
• Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?
• (For local authorities only) Is it in the public interest to issue a penalty notice in this case given the local authority would be responsible for any resulting prosecution for the original offence in cases of non-payment?

If the answer to those questions is yes, then a penalty notice should be issued. If not, another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

The local authority's decision on whether sufficient support has been provided before issuing a penalty notice should be treated as final. Whatever action is taken after the national threshold has been met, schools, and local authorities where appropriate, will monitor the impact of the action, and if it does not lead to attendance improvement review the case and consider alternative actions.

Notices to improve

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and an authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence).

What sufficient improvement looks like can be decided on a case by case basis taking the individual family's circumstances into account. For some families, no further unauthorised absences will be appropriate, for others some absence may be tolerable if considerable improvement is seen. Details of what sufficient improvement for each case should be made clear in the Notice to Improve. Where it is clear that improvement is not being made, it may be appropriate to issue a penalty notice before the improvement period has ended. For example, a Notice to Improve stated there should be no further unauthorised absences in a 6-week period but the pupil is absent for unauthorised reasons in the first week. The parent should be informed before a penalty notice is issued if it is before the end of the improvement period.

12. Non-compulsory age pupils

Although there is no legal requirement for a pupil to attend nursery, it is widely acknowledged establishing routines including good attendance in early years reaps benefits when children become of compulsory age. It is important to establishing routines in engaging with independent learning and semi structured days as this will empower them in their future be it further education, apprenticeship, university or workplace.

The DfE, 2024, have now advised in the Working together to improve school attendance that:

- On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admission register at the time (except for a pupil who is a boarder).

- The codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the government gain a greater understanding of the delivery of education and the level of, and reason for, absence.

13. Child Missing Education

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024), leaders have ensured that:

- Staff understand what to do when children do not attend regularly.
- Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for students who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions) are in place.
- Staff know that travelling to conflict zones could be an indicator of FGM and forced marriage.

Procedures are in place to ensure that the local authority is always informed if pupils':

- leave the school to be home educated
- move away from the school location
- remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
- are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or are permanently excluded
- Schools will ensure that students who are expected to attend the school but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.
- When a student leaves, schools will record the name of the student's new school and their expected start date.

The DfE, 2024 statutory guidance states "schools are expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school. Children missing education officers or a school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team should also inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if their name is to be deleted from the school register".

14. Deletions from the register

The school will only delete a pupil from their register in accordance with The School Attendance (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2024 the local Authority will be notified of this removal. Our school will inform Children's Service when a child with safeguarding concerns is due to be removed from the school register.

15. Data and Monitoring

To improve attendance, reduce poor attendance and punctuality, and reduce persistent and severe absence, the school will;

- Use attendance data to monitor attendance and punctuality, on a weekly basis, in terms of sessions missed, punctuality, and unexplained absence.
- Identify and focus on those pupils who are persistently or/and severely absent, and deliver interventions and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This can also include referrals to wider support services, and/or formalised support.
- Undertake frequent individual level analysis to identify the pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils in a year group with higher than average absence or for pupils eligible for free school meals if their attendance falls behind that of their more advantaged peers.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This should include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance.

- Look at all severities of absence to identify pupils who can be supported earlier before patterns become entrenched.
- We will ensure the data is shared at every opportunity, e.g. parent's evenings, induction days, teacher training days, school newsletters.
- To check and evaluate the effectiveness of our monitoring of attendance, and strategies to improve attendance, we will meet with families, review plans, and measure the impact of strategies and interventions.
- Half-termly we will produce reports. We will use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium levels).
- Benchmark our attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings will then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- We will provide data and reports to support the work of the board or governing body.

16. Performance

It is important to set realistic targets. The school will look at the interventions as part of the evaluation process in order to maintain their effectiveness. When evaluating success, the school will consider whether or not:

- Attendance has improved
- Punctuality has improved
- Parental response to absence has improved
- Re-integration plans have been successful
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance within the school, governing body and the local community

17. Rewards and interventions

Northlands Primary School will:

- Celebrate Class attendance weekly in Friday's Head Teachers assemblies with a winning class in Key stage 1 and Key stage 2.
- As a whole class approach, every day that **all** pupils are in class, the class receive a letter to a word: once completed, the world spells out 'PERFECT ATTENDANCE'. Once this has been completed, the whole class will be rewarded with a non-uniform day on the Friday of that week.

Additional support for pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health, or their 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, examinations 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" (DfE, 2024).

- School staff will work alongside families to ensure these circumstances are not a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible.
- Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This includes 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 should be the same as it is for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided" (DfE, 2024).

In developing the support, we will;

- Understand the individual needs of the pupil and the family
- Work in partnership with the pupil and the family to put in-school support in place, and work with the local authority, and/or other agencies where external support is needed (and available).
- Regularly review and update the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs.

For pupils with long term physical or mental ill health, school staff are not expected to diagnose or treat physical or mental health conditions, but we are expected to work together with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for every pupil. We will;

- Facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the underlying health issue.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed, and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxious feelings about school attendance.
- Make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

For pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, schools are expected to:

• Work in partnership with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.

•Work in partnership with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed, and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.
•Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
•Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
•Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate.

Attendance is everyone's business so in many of these cases school will not be able to fully support a pupil without the assistance of a range of other agencies. School should:

•Make use of school nursing services and mental health support teams where they are available.
•Consider whether additional support from other external partners (including the local authority, children and young people's mental health services, GPs or other health services) would be appropriate and make referrals.
•Where external support is provided work together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.

If the child has an education health and care plan, school staff should:

•Communicate with the local authority where a pupil's attendance falls or they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
•Where possible agree adjustments to its policies and practices that are consistent with the special educational provision set out in the education health and care plan in collaboration with parents.
•Where needed work with the local authority to review and amend the education health and care plan to incorporate the additional or different attendance support identified.

Medical evidence for recording absences should only be needed in a minority of cases. Where a pupil's health need means they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, schools can seek medical evidence to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision in line with the statutory guidance.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process. If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day.

Appendix 1 - The importance and effect of school attendance is illustrated in the following table:
Figure 1 (School Attendance & Education Services in Essex).

Descriptor	Threshold attendance	Actual attendance	Whole days of absence	Learning Hours Lost
Excellent	100% 99%	190 days 188 days	0 2	**0** **10**
Good	98% 97% 96%	186 days 184 days 182.5 days	4 6 7.5	**20** **30** **37.5**
Cause for Concern	95% 94% 93% 92% 91%	180.5 days 179 days 177 days 175 days 173 days	9.5 11 13 15 17	**47.5** **55** **65** **75** **85**
Unsatisfactory	90% 89% 88% 87%	171 days 169 days 167 days 165 days	19 21 23 25	**95** **105** **115** **125**
Serious cause for concern	86%	163 days	27	**135**
Critical	85% 84% 83% 82% 81% 80%	161.5 days 159.5 days 158 days 156 days 154 days 152 days	28.5 30.5 32 34 36 38	**142.5** **152.5** **160** **170** **180** **190**

Appendix 2 - Further Guidance about diseases and conditions that prevent pupils from attending school. Health Protection for schools, nurseries and other childcare facilities *(Health Protection Agency (2010))*

Infection	Exclusion period	Comments
Athlete's Foot	None	Athlete's foot is not a serious condition. Treatment is recommended
Chickenpox	Five days from onset of rash and all the lesions have crusted over	
Cold sores (herpes simplex)	None	Avoid kissing and contact with the sores. Cold sores are generally mild and heal without treatment
Conjunctivitis	None	If an outbreak/cluster occurs, consult your local HPT
Diarrhoea and vomiting	Whilst symptomatic and 48 hours after the last symptoms	See section in chapter 9
Diphtheria*	Exclusion is essential. Always consult your local HPT	Preventable by vaccination. Family contacts must be excluded until cleared to return by your local HPT
Flu (influenza)	Until recovered	Report outbreaks to your local HPT
Glandular Fever	None	
Hand, foot and mouth	None	Contact your local HPT if a large number of children are infected. Exclusion may be considered in some circumstances
Head lice	None	Treatment recommended only when live lice seen
Hepatitis A*	Exclude until seven days after onset of jaundice (or 7 days after symptom onset if no jaundice)	In an outbreak of hepatitis A, your local HPT will advise on control measures
Hepatitis B*, C*, HIV	None	Hepatitis B and C and HIV are blood borne viruses that are not infectious through casual contact
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted/healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment	Antibiotic treatment speeds healing and reduces infectious period
Measles	Four days from onset of rash and recovered	Preventable by vaccination (2 doses of MMR). Promote MMR for all pupils and staff. Pregnant staff contacts should seek prompt advice from their GP or midwife
Ringworm	Not usually required	Treatment is needed
Rubella (German measles)	Four days from onset of rash	Preventable by vaccination (2 doses of MMR). Promote MMR for all pupils and staff. Pregnant staff contacts should seek prompt advice from their GP or midwife.
Scarlet Fever	Exclude until 24 hours of appropriate antibiotic treatment completed	A person is infectious for 2-3 weeks if antibiotics are not administered. In the event of two or more suspected cases, please contact local health protection
Scabies	Can return after first treatment	Household and close contacts require treatment at the same time
Slapped cheek/fifth disease/Parvo virus B19	None (once rash has developed)	Pregnant contacts should consult with their GP or midwife
Threadworms	None	Treatment recommended for child and household
Tonsillitis	None	There are many causes, but most cases are due to viruses and do not need an antibiotic treatment
Tuberculosis (TB)	Always consult your local HPT BEFORE disseminating information to staff/parents/carers	Only pulmonary (lung) TB is infectious to others. Needs close, prolonged contact to spread.
Warts and verrucae	None	Verrucae should be covered in swimming pools and changing rooms
Whooping cough (pertussis)	Two days from starting antibiotic treatment or 21 days from onset of symptoms if no antibiotics	Preventable by vaccination. After treatment, non-infectious coughing may continue for many weeks. Your local HPT will organise any contact tracing

Appendix 3

Attendance Codes – September 2024

Attending the school	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

Figure 1:

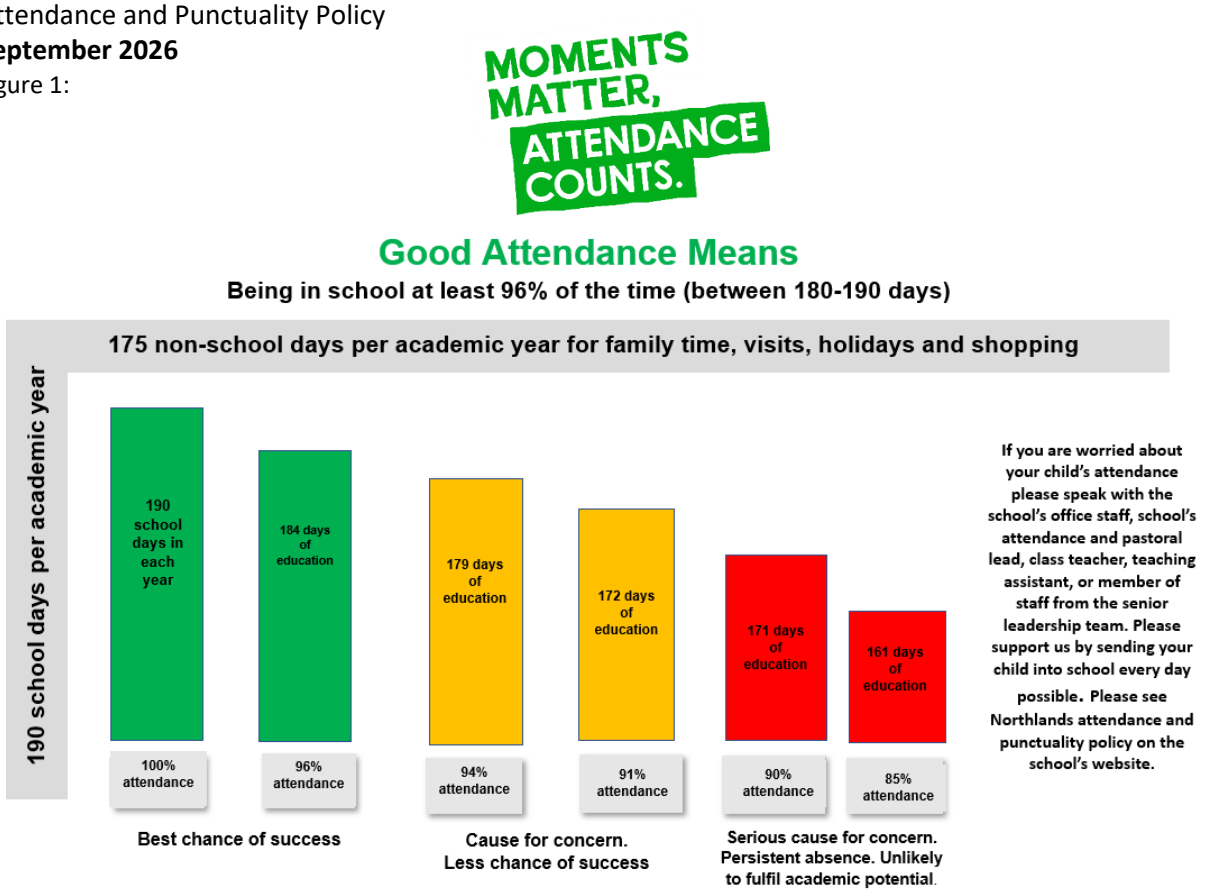
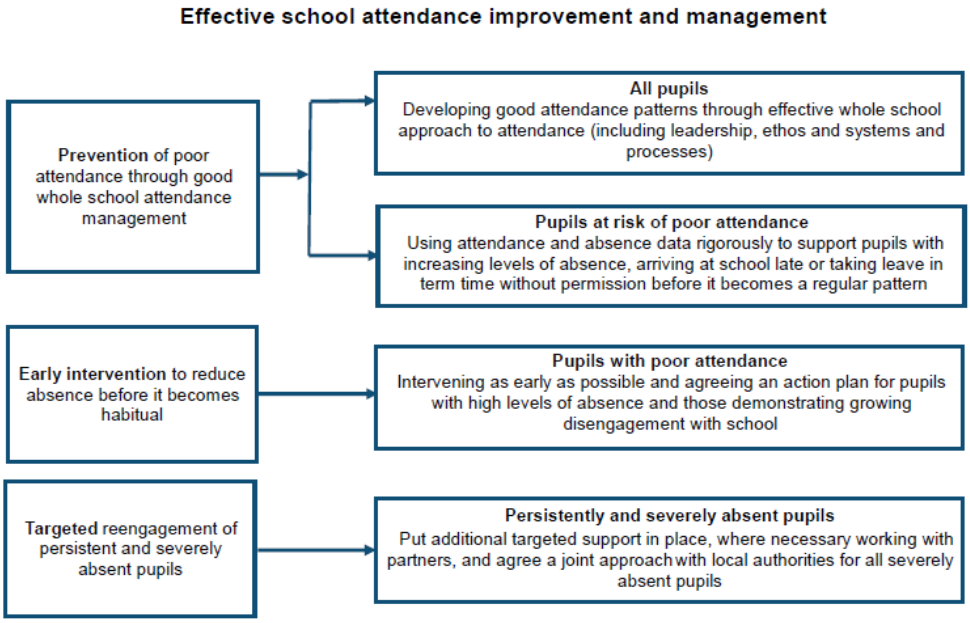


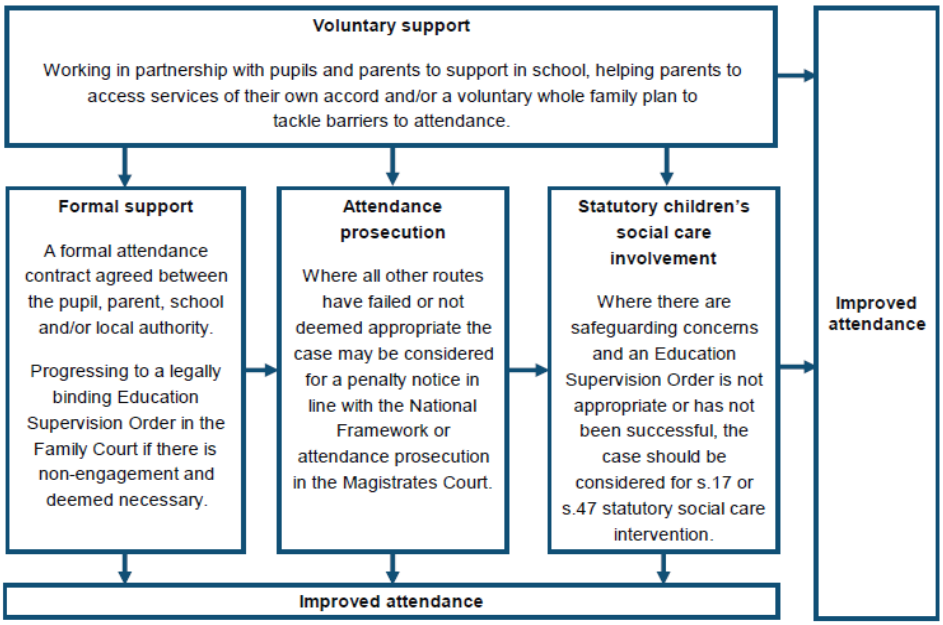
Figure 2:



(DfE, 2024)

Figure 3:

Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



(DfE, 2024)