



Grange Primary School

Pursuing excellence for every child

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Date Reviewed: September 2025



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Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Introduction

At Grange Primary School we expect children to attend school every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

If children are to get the greatest benefit from their education in school, it is important that they have good attendance and arrive punctually. As children grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and employers.

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life and research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance, punctuality and educational progress and attainment. This underpins everything alongside a continual desire to ensure all children's wellbeing is prioritised alongside their educational progress and attainment.

Parents/carers and the school staff are partners in making this a success and this partnership is very important to the school. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that your child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

As parents/carers, it is your responsibility to ensure your child/children arrive at school and return home safely.

Key staff

Member of Senior leadership team with responsibility for attendance: Mrs C. Plaskitt (Headteacher)

Member of staff with responsibility for attendance support: Miss S Claybourn (Learning Mentor).

Where to report absence to: School Office - 01472 232030 before 8.50am.

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- ensure that all children attend school well
- ensure all children are punctual and ready to learn

- keep good records of attendance through the school registers and to take prompt actions to follow up absences
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- to investigate and act immediately where truancy is suspected or confirmed
- to monitor closely pupils with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and where appropriate, other agencies to bring about improvements
- ensure attendance meets Government, Local Authority targets and School targets and figures and improve on a yearly basis. **Current school target is 96% (This equates to no more than 7 days absent over the school year).**

Expectations

We expect that all children will:

- attend school every day as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so
- attend school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- ensure that they contact the school daily, before 8.50am, of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details
- provide the school with evidence if a child attends an unavoidable specialist appointment during the school day
- provide appointment cards as evidence for any absence from school.
- provide the school with medical evidence (i.e. appointment card and medication) when absence has been for more than 5 days.

We expect that the school will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere
- provide a safe learning environment
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's/carer's concerns

- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality
- contact parents on the first day of absence when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the Head teacher can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition
- regularly inform parents/carers of the % attendance of all children where there are concerns
- provide parents/carers with termly attendance updates
- make initial enquiries regarding children who are not attending regularly
- meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare.
- will notify the Local Authority after 15 days sickness.

Definitions

- Everyday counts as two sessions.
- Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.
- Regular attendance means that your child must attend school every day, unless there are justified reasons, and arrive at school on time.

Authorised Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. The Head teacher authorises the absence.

Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.
- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation' has been given.

Examples of Authorised absences:	Examples of Unauthorised absences:
• genuine illness of the pupil; • hospital/dental/doctors appointment for the pupil (official evidence will be required); • major religious observances; • visits to prospective new schools;	• shopping / day trip / visit to a theme park; • a birthday treat; • oversleeping due to a late night; • looking after other children / other family member;
☐ external exams or educational assessments.	☐ appointments for other family members; ☐ holidays.

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

100% + - Excellent 96% - 97% - Good	Well done! This will help all aspects of your child's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic. Your child's attendance is at, or above, the school target
95% - 92%	Strive to build on this. Your child's attendance is below expected and will be monitored. A letter will be sent to you to inform you of your child's attendance. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will become involved at this stage if improvement is not seen.
91% - 90% Requires significant improvement	Absence is now significantly affecting your child's attainment and progress. This is a cause for concern and will be closely monitored. The school will contact you to review the particular context and to plan for improved attendance and/or punctuality. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will become involved at this stage.
Below 90% & below Unacceptable (Persistent Absenteeism)	Absence is seriously affecting attainment and progress and disrupting your child's development. Your child's attendance is now a major concern. A referral to Education Welfare Officer will be made and a meeting will be convened at school to put in place strategies to improve attendance rapidly. Legal proceedings may follow.

The school and the Education Welfare Officer work closely together and regularly monitor both attendance and punctuality. Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

Promoting and incentivising good attendance.

The main benefit from regular and punctual attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

As a school we promote high attendance and punctuality at all levels of school life: from day to day encouragement with individual children to whole school displays. Some examples of this include:

- Positive start of the day routines promoting whole class attendance.
- Individual check in's with children where their attendance has been noted to fall below the expected standard.
- Letters/emails from the Education Welfare officer to parents where there has been an increase in a child's attendance to celebrate this.
- Supportive phone calls from designated staff.
- Weekly celebrations of good attendance and recognition of whole class good attendance. With the opportunity of a class winning whole class prizes at the end of each full term (Christmas, Easter and Summer)

When to Report Absence to the School

All absences **must** be reported on the first day of absence. In all cases of absence, the parents/carers should:

- only keep your child away from school if really necessary. The school will always call and send home an unwell child;
- telephone the school on 01472 232030 at the earliest opportunity and before 8.50am to let them know why your child is going to be absent. We do have robust procedures in place, and staff will be following protocol of finding out exactly why your child is absent.
- please call daily and keep the school informed if more than one days absence is necessary;
- send a note to school explaining the reason for absence;
- if specialist medical appointments are absolutely necessary, please bring your child to school for the rest of the school day and the paperwork to show the appointment.

Grange Primary School uses a '1st day calling' system. If your child fails to register or is absent and we have not received notification by 8.50am a call will be made to you. This only applies on the first day of absence. It is the parent's/carer's responsibility to call the school each day their child is off school and explain the reason why.

The school or Education Welfare Officer may conduct a home visit on any day of absence, including the first day, where no contact has been made with the school by the start of the school day, or where there are concerns regarding frequent absence and safeguarding.

Where appropriate, and in line with our safeguarding responsibilities, the school may seek support from or share information with relevant external agencies if we consider this necessary.

If a child is absent from school with no explanation offered by the parents/carers within two weeks, it becomes an **unauthorised absence**.

What if I don't report my child's absence?

At Grange we have robust protocols in place if you do not report your child as absent. You will receive a call/email from school investigating why your child has not attended. The school or Education Welfare Officer may conduct a home visit when contact with school is not made by the start of the school day or in instances of frequent absence for safeguarding reasons.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individuals learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount therefore that all children arrive at school on time.

For school children the main playground gates are open from 8.40am. Registration starts at 8.45am closes promptly at 8.50am. If your child arrives after this time they must enter via the school office where they will need to sign in and will be marked as late.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- Registers close at 9.20am and after this lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.00pm.
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with through the Home School Link Worker and may be referred to Education Welfare.

Children's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

During school hours, the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents/carers must arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time (with the exception of specialist medical appointments).
- Parents/carers must complete the appointment paperwork at the school office to provide evidence and confirm the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, and the expected return time.
- When attending specialist appointments during the school day parents/carers must ensure they are only absent for the period of time of the appointment. For example, a 10:30am appointment would mean the child should be present at the start of the school day and return following the appointment.
- Children must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a child is being collected from the school, parents/carers are to report to the school office before the child is allowed to leave the site.
- If a child leaves the school site without permission, their parents/carers will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the child as a missing person.

Attendance support

As a school community we acknowledge and understand that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, we alongside partner agencies work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance is therefore not seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement involve close interaction with our schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. As an inclusion team, and wider school community, all stakeholders both teaching and non-teaching understand the importance of consistent and proactive approach to attendance.

Within school we take pride in creating a whole school culture that is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities. When new families start our school, the attendance expectations are clearly explained and this is reinforced and supported by

initiatives even with our youngest learners in Nursery. Where a Nursery child is at risk of falling below the expected attendance to support funding allocation.

As a school we pride ourselves on supporting parents and pupils and in the first instance we will:

- Support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this should include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. These actions should be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

Where absence intensifies, so will the support provided by Grange, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners:

- If the needs and barriers are individual to the pupil this may include provision of mentoring, 1-2-1 tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision.
- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment.
- Where engagement in support is proving challenging, school will hold more formal conversations with the parents (and pupil where they are old enough to understand). This is likely to be led by the senior leader responsible for attendance and may include the school's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team or Education Welfare Officer. These meetings should clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future, but should also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.

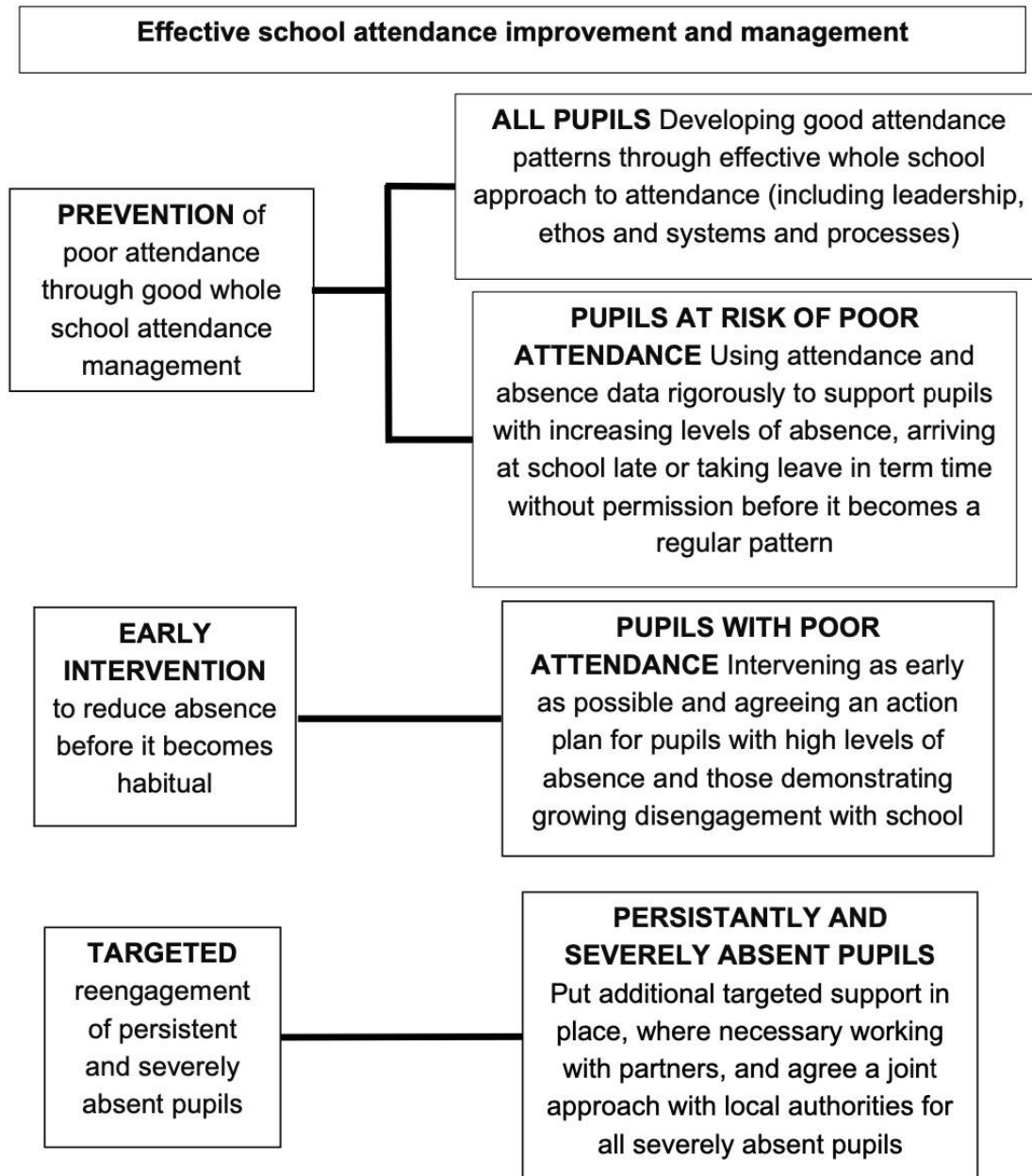
Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with all schools should work with the local authority to:

- Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
- Issue a fixed 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.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners:

- 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.



Parent/carer responsibilities.

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness) before 8.50am.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

If your child is at risk of becoming persistently absent we expect parents and carers to

In addition to the statements above also:

- 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.

If your child is persistently absent we expect parents and carers to:

In addition to the statements above also:

- 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 your child is severely absent we expect parents and carers to:

In addition to the statements above also:

- 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

Persistent and severe absenteeism

Where a child's absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), we will work together with the family to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils.

These severely absent pupils, pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). may find it more difficult to be in school or face

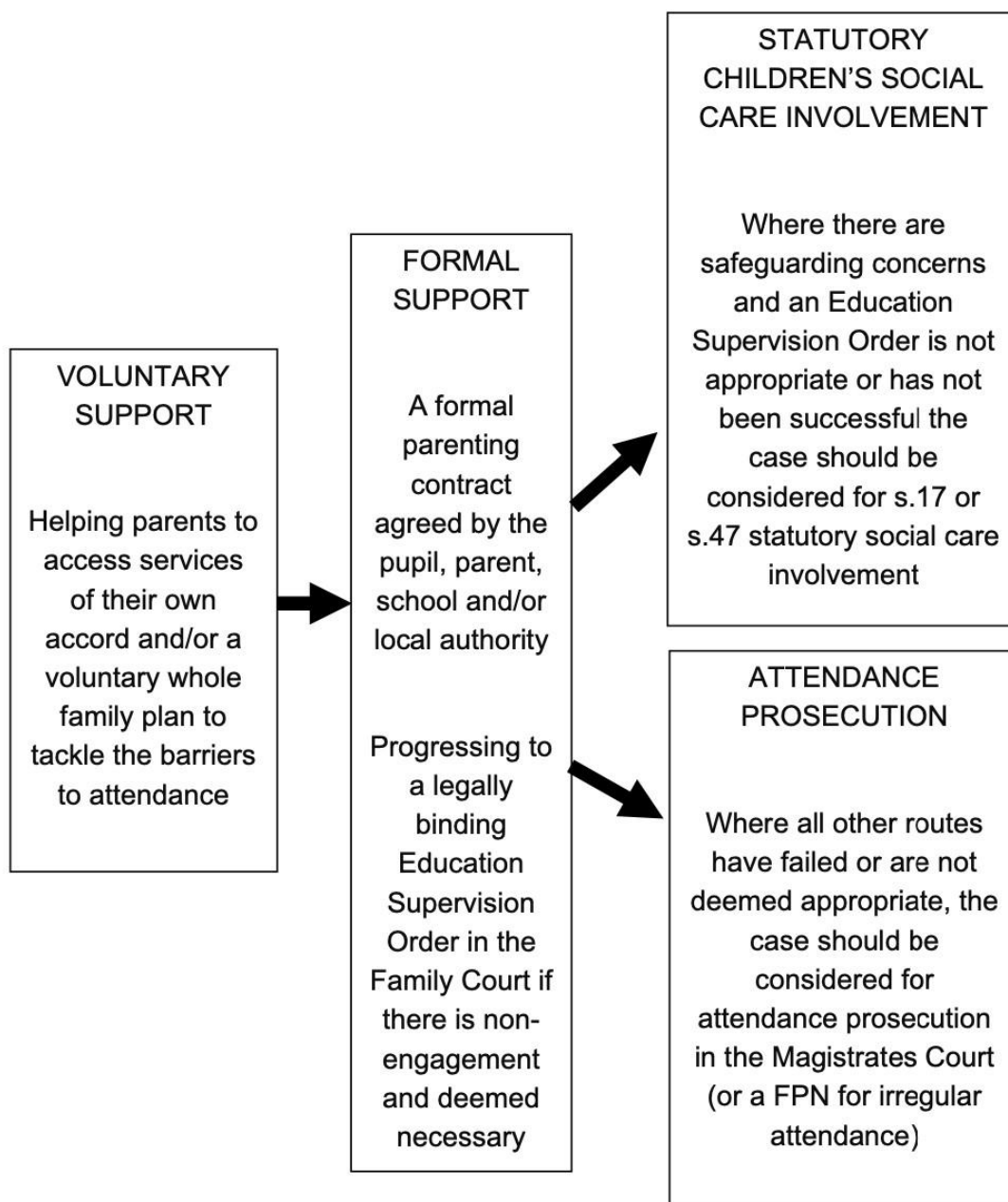
bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support - this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment.

Legal intervention

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 will liaise with school and the early help lead practitioner or social worker (where applicable) to take forward attendance legal intervention in line with section 5 to formalise support and/or enforce attendance.

- Understand and make use of formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders and use them fairly and consistently.
- Set out clearly for pupils, parents, and schools when and how attendance legal intervention will be used where voluntary support is not appropriate, or where absence was not for legitimate reasons and support has not been engaged with and/or been successful.
- Secure effective joint working between the School Attendance Support Team and statutory children's social care services to work together where there are safeguarding concerns or absence becomes severe. This should include building attendance expectations into children in need and child protection plans where appropriate or considering developing a plan as an intensification of support where formalised attendance support (such as an education supervision order) is no longer sufficient or has not been effective.
- Issue fixed penalty notices in line with local codes of conduct where absence was unauthorised and support has been provided but has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).
- Take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort where all other routes have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate.



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I have a social worker and myself or the school is worried about my child's attendance. What will happen?

The school has a legal duty of care to ensure all children open to other services are kept fully informed of any updates, one of these being if a parent is not complying with the legal expectation of their child attending school. This information will be shared with the social worker and their attendance percentage will be documented and reported on should it be requested.

My child has medical conditions and is on the SEND register and their attendance is poor. What can school do to support them?

As a school we will have sensitive conversations and develop good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed. Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.

We will work 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. In addition, schools should work 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.

As well as specific support approaches we will 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. 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 anxiety about school attendance.

Where a pupil with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education

The Law

By law, parents and carers must ensure that all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) receive a suitable, full-time education (Education Act, 1996). NE Lincolnshire Council employs Education Welfare Officers to monitor school attendance and to support both schools and parents/carers to ensure that every child attends school regularly. As a parent/carers, you may be committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice, prosecution or application for an Education Supervision Order.

Leave of Absence

- Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which came into effect on 1st September 2013, states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.
- Any absence must be requested as far in advance as possible prior to the requested date, at least two weeks. A form (Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time) will need to be collected from the office and completed.

- The guidance from NE Lincs Council states that if a parent/carer takes their child out of school e.g. on holiday or other unauthorised leave of absence, for 5 days (10 sessions) or more, without the authority of the Headteacher, **each** parent/carer will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice for each child who is absent. (for your first penalty notice the cost will be £80 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Any unpaid fine will lead to prosecution). If this is the second penalty notice within 3-year period, then the higher fine of £160 will stand. The third time a Penalty Notice is issued the case will be presented straight to the magistrate's court where a fine of up to £2500 per parent/carer per child can be issued. If a parent is found guilty, the offence may appear on a parent's future DBS certificate.
- If leave is taken without authorisation by the school, it may be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare may be notified. A Penalty Notice may be issued.
- For absences less than a day (i.e. specialist medical appointments) a leave of absence form must be completed at the school office and evidence of the appointment must be provided. Failure to comply with either of these will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised' and may result in a penalty notice being issued. (£80 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days).

Penalty Notices

Under existing legislation, each parent/carer commits an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as 'unauthorised' (those absences for which the Headteacher has not given permission).

'Unauthorised' will also cover when appointments are taken and evidence is not provided, children are not returned to school following the appointment or paperwork is not completed at the school office prior to leave of absence, no matter how short.

Depending on circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Safeguarding

"Basic to safeguarding children is to ensure their attendance at school." (OFSTED 2002). Children are best protected by regularly attending school where they will be safe from harm and where there are professionals to monitor their well-being. All schools will encourage the full attendance of all children at school. Where concerns that a child is missing education and/ or because of suspected abuse are raised, these will be reported to NEL children's services and the Children Missing from Education Service to effectively manage the risks and liaise with all relevant agencies.

Date ratified by the Governing Body:

February 2026

Date last reviewed:

September 2025

Next review date:

July 2026

Virtually Signed by Chair of Governors: Mr S. Ryley _____ Date: February 2026