



Attendance and Absence Policy

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Body: Monday 6th October 2025**

Date of Next Review:

October 2026

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Statement of intent

Throston Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is [Ms Lynne Currell](#), and she can be contacted by email lcurrell@throston.school.org.uk, via phone: **(01429) 288291** or via **ClassDojo**. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following Education Acts 1996 and 2002

- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations) 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and 1963
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE 'Children missing education'
- DfE 'Providing remote education: guidance for schools'
- DfE 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- DfE 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Information Governance Suite

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensuring 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 LA.
- Ensuring the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Monitoring absence data and reporting it to the governors
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with the LA by notifying them where a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school's admission register outside of standard transition times.
- Providing the LA with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or who have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been classed as unauthorised.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Working with parents of pupils with SEND to develop specific support approaches for attendance, including where school transport is regularly being missed and where pupils with SEND face barriers within school.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with at least two emergency contact numbers.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to part-time timetable
- Code D: Dual registered at another school
- Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
- Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at **8.45am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by **8.40am**. Pupils will have a morning break at **10:15am**, which will last until **10:30am**, and a lunch break at **12:00pm**, which will last until **1:00pm** – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **8:55am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at **9.05am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by **1:10pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at **1:20pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before **9:00am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by **the close of the morning register** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than **three** school days in a row, or more than **10** school days in **one term**, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of Persistent Absence (PA), arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The school will inform the LA, on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below **90 percent**, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil does not return from a period of leave or has a continuous period of absence, the school will work jointly with the LA to carry out reasonable enquiries under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to establish the pupil's whereabouts. In conducting these enquiries, the school and its LA will liaise with the Home LA. If, following these enquiries, the pupil's name is removed from the school's admission register, the Home LA will be expected to investigate whether the pupil should be classified as a child missing education.

6. Attendance register

The school uses **SIMS.net** to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day** and **at the start of the afternoon session**. This register will record whether pupils are:

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

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school

- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **six years**.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher **in writing** at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur. Parents will use the LA Leave of Absence form (appendix 1).

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted,

the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will have the discretion to grant leave of absence during school hours for pupils to undertake employment, whether paid or unpaid, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

A leave of absence will only be given by a person who the school's proprietor has authorised to do so. That authorised person will not give a pupil leave of absence to undertake employment (whether paid or unpaid) during school hours except employment to take part in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad as per [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#) namely:

- Where the LA has issued a licence for the pupil to take part in a performance as regulated by section 37(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963.
- Where a licence is not required because an exception applies under section 37(3) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, including where a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) covering the pupil has been granted by the LA in which the performance will take place, or by the Secretary of State.
- Where a Justice of the Peace has granted a licence under section 25(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 for the pupil to travel abroad for a performance or another regulated purpose.

The school will give due consideration to requests for leave of absence supported by a licence issued by a LA or a BOPA. Such requests will be treated sympathetically, provided the school is satisfied that participation in the activity will not have a detrimental impact on the pupil's education.

Where a LA licence specifies the dates on which a pupil is permitted to be absent for the purpose of a performance, the school will record the absence for those dates as if a formal leave of absence has been requested and granted.

In cases where a licence issued by the LA does not specify particular dates, or where the absence is supported by a BOPA or another form of exemption or licence – such as one granted by a Justice of the Peace under relevant legislation – the decision to grant leave of absence will remain at the discretion of the school.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Parents travelling for occupational purposes

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHCPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a temporary reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

The school will seek medical evidence for recording absences in a minority of cases. Where a pupil's health need means that they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, the school will seek medical evidence to better understand the need of the pupil.

9. Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within **one week** of the request.

Pupils will leave the school premises within **5 minutes** of the start of lunch and will return no later than **5 minutes** before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child **at the school office** when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in **at the school office**. A member of staff will be available **at the school office** before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff **at the school office** has given their permission.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

10. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by **8:45am** and **1:00pm**, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the **school office** and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

11. Absent pupils

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the headteacher immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher
- The following areas will be systematically searched (see Appendix 2: plan for child missing on site)
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - The library
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The absent pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing
- If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

12. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Termly 100% certificates and reward raffle
- Yearly 100% medals and certificates

13. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are at least **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into

consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the family support office will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

14. Persistent absence (PA)

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10 percent or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50 percent or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence will remain central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- Child in Our Care
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading regular check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHCP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

15. Penalty notices and legal intervention

Please refer to Appendix 3 – Hartlepool Borough Council - Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices for school absence – September 2024.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an SEO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an SEO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

16. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a **half-termly, termly and full-year** basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

17. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

18. Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

19. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **97 percent.**

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the headteacher and governors. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **October 2026.** Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Appendix 1 Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Throston Primary has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided.
2. If there is no contact after three days a home visit is made. For vulnerable pupils the attendance officer will liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to determine if a visit is required on day one.
3. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
4. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the attendance officer and SLT.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls to **95 percent**, the attendance officer will investigate then decide on next steps. The attendance officer also makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below **95 percent**, a letter may be sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the national expected standard.
7. If a pupil's attendance falls below **90 percent**, a referral is made to the LA to implement strategies. The LA send a letter to parents.
8. The pupil's attendance is monitored for **four or six weeks** and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents may be required to attend a meeting in school with the LA and attendance officer and set targets for their child.
9. If targets are not met, a monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents. If there is no improvement after an additional **four weeks**, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.

Appendix 2 Plan for child missing on site





**Code of Conduct for issuing
Penalty Notices for school
absence –
September 2024**

School Attendance Team – Updated July 2024

Introduction

1. The purpose of this code of conduct is to ensure that Penalty Notices for school absence are issued in a manner that is fair and consistent across Hartlepool Borough Council. The code sets out the arrangements for administering Penalty Notices in Hartlepool and must be adhered to. The code complies with relevant regulations and the Department for Education's National Framework for Penalty Notices as set out in the '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' statutory guidance.

Consultation

2. This code has been drawn up in consultation with Head Teachers and governing bodies of state-funded schools and the local Police force.

Legal basis

3. Penalty notices may be issued to a parent as an alternative to prosecution for irregular school attendance under s444 of the Education Act 1996. They can only be issued in relation to pupils of compulsory school age in maintained schools, pupil referral units, academy schools, AP academies, and certain off-site places as set out in section 444A(1)(b).
4. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (and subsequent amendments) set out how Penalty Notices for school absence must be used.
5. A Penalty Notice can only be issued by an authorised officer, which for Hartlepool Borough Council will be a Local Authority Officer.
6. The National Framework for Penalty Notices is published in statutory guidance '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)'. It provides further National guidance on the operation of Penalty Notice schemes for school absence in England.
7. Penalty Notices can be issued to anyone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices can be issued to those who have day-to-day responsibility for the pupil's attendance, or any parent/carers who has allowed the absence (regardless of which parent/carers has applied for the leave of absence).

Rationale

8. Research published by the Department for Education in May 2022 found pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.
 - Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and Maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.

- Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and Maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and Maths.
- 9. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and often the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.
- 10. Where difficulties arise with school attendance, professionals should take a 'support first' approach in line with the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance, only resorting to legal enforcement when necessary. The aim is that the need for legal enforcement is reduced by taking a supportive approach to tackle the barriers to attendance and intervening early before absence becomes entrenched.
- 11. The National Framework for Penalty Notices is based on the principles that Penalty Notices should only be used in cases where:
 - support is not appropriate (e.g. a term time holiday) or where support has been provided and not engaged with or not worked, and
 - they are the most appropriate tool to change parent/carer behaviour and improve attendance for that particular family.

When may a Penalty Notice for absence be appropriate?

12. When a school becomes aware that the National threshold has been met, they must consider whether a Penalty Notice can and should be issued or not. The National threshold has been met when a pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) within 10 school weeks, with one of, or a combination of the following codes:
 - a) code G (the pupil is absent without authorisation for the purpose of leave in term time),
 - b) code O (none of the other rows of Table 3 in regulation 10(3) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies), and
 - c) code U (the pupil attended after the taking of the register ended but before the end of the session, where no other code applies)
13. Hartlepool Borough Council will consider issuing Penalty Notices within the National framework in the following circumstances:
 - Ongoing unauthorised absence - When:
 - a pupil has had a minimum of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a period of 10 school weeks;
 - a school has offered support in relation to school attendance and;
 - despite the support offered by the school, there has been little improvement in the pupil's attendance; or a notice to improve has been issued but there has not been the required improvement over a six-week period.

- Unauthorised Leave in Term Time - When:
 - a pupil has been taken on an unauthorised “leave of absence” (code G) from school or a place of alternative educational provision for minimum of 10 continuous sessions (five days) and;
 - the school have followed the relevant procedures and referred to the Local Authority in order for, a Penalty Notice to be considered.
 - Where a request for a leave of absence has not been completed by parent/carer, and school have reason to believe that the child was taken on an unauthorised holiday in term time, the onus is on the parent/carer to provide evidence to the School to the contrary, to avoid a Penalty Notice being considered.
- Suspended Child in a Public Place - When:
 - a child of compulsory school age is suspended on disciplinary grounds, the parent of that child, provided they have been served with Notice under Section 104 of the act, must ensure that the child is not present in a public place during school hours during the first five days of that exclusion without reasonable justification. Where parents fail to ensure their child is not in a public place under these circumstances, a Penalty Notice may be issued.

14. If in an individual case the Local Authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. This will be in exceptional circumstances only, and the issuing of Penalty Notices in these circumstances can only be authorised by a manager within the Attendance Service.

15. If repeated Penalty Notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. The National Framework for Penalty Notices sets out that a maximum of 2 Penalty Notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. If the National threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider direct prosecution under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

16. For the purpose of the escalation process, previous Penalty Notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward if the parent/carer pleaded guilty or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn. Where Penalty Notices are not paid for the first offence, the Local Authority will go straight to prosecution for a second offence under section 444 (1) of the Act.

17. Though not a requirement of the framework, the Local Authority may, in cases of high levels of unauthorised absence including where unauthorised leave in term time of 30 school days or more has been taken, decide not to issue a Penalty Notice, but instead prosecute the parent/carer under sections 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Act.

Key considerations prior to the issue of a Penalty Notice for school absence

18. The following considerations will be made by the Local Authority before issuing a Penalty Notice to ensure consistency of approach:

- In cases where support is not appropriate (for example, for leave in term time), consider on a case-by-case basis:
 - Is a Penalty Notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would 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
 - Is it in the public interest to issue a Penalty Notice in this case given the Local Authority would be accepting responsibility for any resulting prosecution for the original offence in cases of non-payment?
- In cases where support is appropriate, consider on a case-by-case basis:
 - Has sufficient support already been provided? Sufficient support will usually include an offer of Early Help; the offer of a formal support meeting; and the offer of an attendance contract.
 - Is a Penalty Notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parent/carer behaviour for this particular family or would 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
 - 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 the above questions is 'yes', then a Penalty Notice (or a notice to improve in cases where support is appropriate) will usually be issued.

Notice to improve

19. A notice to improve is a final opportunity for a parent/carer to engage in support and improve attendance before a Penalty Notice is issued, in cases of ongoing unauthorised absence from school. If the National threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent/carer, or have not worked, a Notice to Improve may be sent to give parent/carer(s) a final chance to engage in support. The Local Authority 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 impact on a parent/carer's behaviour (e.g. because the parent/carer has already received one for a similar offence).

20. Decisions as to whether a Notice to Improve or other actions should be taken will be made by the Local Authority once a referral is made by the school.

21. If a Notice to Improve is issued, the Local Authority will notify the school and ask for the child's attendance to be monitored for a maximum of six weeks. Should there be any further unauthorised absence accrued within the improvement period, the Local Authority must be advised immediately by the school and a Penalty Notice will be considered.

Penalty Notices

22. Hartlepool Borough Council issues all education Penalty Notices in Hartlepool.
23. In order for a request for a Penalty Notice or other disposals to be considered the school must complete an online referral form within six weeks of the threshold being reached, and include the evidence specified in the appropriate guidance.
24. On receipt of the referral the Local Authority will review the evidence and decide whether sufficient support has been provided before issuing a Penalty Notice.
25. The Local Authority will inform the school about whether Penalty Notices are paid, withdrawn or prosecuted for non-payment. They will do this by contacting the school by email as soon as possible regarding the outcome of the referral.
26. Where pupils move between Local Authority areas, Hartlepool can be contacted on penaltynotice@hartlepool.gov.uk to find out if Penalty Notices have been issued previously.
27. Where pupils attend school in Hartlepool but live in a neighbouring Local Authority Hartlepool Borough Council will work with neighbouring Local Authorities to set out how we will work together. This might include how the Local Authority will liaise with the home Local Authority in cases where a Penalty Notice is being considered and support is appropriate, and that support is being provided by the home Local Authority.