



Wateringbury Church of
England Primary School

Attendance Policy

Document Type:	Policy
Owner:	Headteacher
Governor Committee:	FGB
Date Adopted by Governors:	July 2023
Re-adoption Date:	July 2025
Policy Type:	Safeguarding
Statutory Policy:	Yes
Based on model/template	The Key/ KCC Checklist
Document History	
Date	Summary of Changes
March 2022 July 2023	Updates following recommendations from compliance visit in October 2021 Rewritten to reflect new guidance

Learning, growing, achieving.....our journey together with God.

WATERINGBURY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Our Vision and Values

Guided by our Christian values and nurturing culture, we aspire to enable everyone to grow to meet the challenges of our ever-changing world and to reach out to the wider community.

Every child is seen as a unique learner, loved by God and is equally valued and championed to achieve their very best in all they do.

LOVE FORGIVENESS JOY RESILIENCE RESPECT COURAGE

PART ONE: POLICY

1. Introduction

It is the aim of Wateringbury CE Primary School that pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and is an integral part of our school.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with them, their parents and partner organisations to remove barriers, by building strong and trusting relationships. Therefore, improving attendance is everyone's business.

2. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time, efficient education to which they are entitled; acting early to address patterns of absence and creating a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood and valued by all parties.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents¹ must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, taking into account the individual needs of our pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Therefore, in the development of our policy we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory² school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our pupils to go to school every day unless they are really not well enough to attend. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality is essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can, for any pupil who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition.

Please see DfE guidance documents [‘Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015’](#) and [‘Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013’](#) – or ask the school for printed copies.

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our

¹ Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

² A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- ♦ Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community.
- ♦ Raise our pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- ♦ Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, pupils and staff.
- ♦ Work in partnership with parents, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- ♦ Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- ♦ Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality.

2.1 Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate number of lessons missed
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

3. Safeguarding and Attendance

[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) is the statutory guidance that sets out the legal expectations on all professionals that work with children. Low levels of school attendance can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. If we are worried about your child and have concerns about their welfare we will follow our school's safeguarding procedures and where necessary seek support from other agencies.

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2022 version, or as updated by the DfE) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information).

4. Legislation and guidance

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

- ♦ Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- ♦ Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- ♦ Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- ♦ [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- ♦ [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

This will include: identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).

The school will:

- ◆ Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- ◆ Identify the individual needs of pupils
- ◆ Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- ◆ Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- ◆ Visit children's homes where the children are absent without explanation and the school is unable to contact the family.
- ◆ Discuss pupils with falling attendance or levels of absence (authorised and unauthorised) at termly attendance meetings and actions (such as letters, meetings, referrals) are decided upon.

6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing and enhance their understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

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.

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.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions, children with a social worker or those who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Reduced timetable will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period to support pupils to reintegrate back into education to access fulltime provision.

The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

7. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- ♦ the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a
- ♦ symptom of wider circumstances,
- ♦ the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers
- ♦ the school/trusts' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and
- ♦ improving attendance,
- ♦ and the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive
- ♦ support to pupils who need it.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include:

- ♦ the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data,

and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

PART TWO: WHAT THE LAW SAYS AND OUR SCHOOL PROCEDURES

1. Recording attendance – the attendance register

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil is:

- ♦ Present;
- ♦ Absent;
- ♦ Attending an approved educational activity; or,
- ♦ Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance and is supported by the use of our Management Information System to record attendance information.

[See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes]

We will also record:

- ♦ [For pupils of compulsory school age] Whether the absence is authorised or not
- ♦ The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- ♦ The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

2. Present at School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

The attendance office, FLO and/or headteacher will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Our pupils must arrive by 8:50am on each school day.

Our morning register is taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:15am

Our afternoon register is taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:15pm

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (L) – which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed (9:15am or 1:15pm) they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code “Late after registers close” (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. See DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).

2.1 Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

3. Authorised Absence

‘Authorised absence’ means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:

3.1 Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school’s absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance [‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’ 2022³](#) which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil’s GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

³ Please ask the school for a printed copy of Working Together to Improve School Attendance if required

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

Parents should ring the school office before 9:00am on the day of absence (emails and dojo messages may not be checked first thing in the morning). They may need to record a message on the answerphone (option 1 on the menu).

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Mental Health, Emotionally Based School Avoidance and Wellbeing

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school.

The impact of EBSA on children is far-reaching, it has been linked to seriously hampering children's psychological, social, and academic performance and subsequently performance in exams and employment opportunities.

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Family Liaison Officer for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Parents who have concerns about their child's special educational needs and disabilities can contact our school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator for further information on the support available.

The [Kent Local Offer](#) provides children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities, families and professionals, with information in one place, helping them to understand what services they can expect from a range of local agencies and schools.

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

3.2 Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice (via a leave request form) is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

3.3 Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

3.4 Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

3.5 Suspensions (aka Exclusions)

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as a suspension or permanent exclusion. The school will follow the current [DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions](#).

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the suspension/exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

4. First Day of Absence Response

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- ♦ Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- ♦ Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- ♦ Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- ♦ Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we may conduct a home visit or contact the police to request a welfare check.

5. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

The school seeks to work with parents and carers to ensure good school attendance. It is recognised that young children are not responsible for lateness and poor attendance and so rewards need to be sensitively managed. Children are praised for improvements to attendance and are supported to begin to take responsibility for ensuring that they are ready for school each day.

Some children with medical conditions will find it difficult to secure full attendance and this is managed sensitively through care plans and discussions with parents.

Attendance figures for the week and year to date are shared on the weekly update letter. We have Attendance Ted and Punctuality Pup who spend time in the classes with the highest attendance and lowest number of late arrivals each week (this data is adjusted so that individuals with ongoing illness or on part time timetable do not adversely affect their class's chance of winning).

Families with improving attendance receive congratulatory letters.

6. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form (Appendix 11) which is available from the school website or office. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **two weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with the Social Care and the Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact the Virtual School in relation to any requests for term time absence for a child in care.

7. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- ♦ Absences which have never been properly explained
- ♦ Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark

- ♦ Shopping
- ♦ Birthdays
- ♦ Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- ♦ Day trips
- ♦ Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- ♦ In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in legal sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions. We will refer all unauthorised holiday of five or more days to the local authority unless there are reasonable grounds not to do so.

8. Approved Educational Activity (AEA)

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case. (See DfE 2020 School Attendance guidance.)

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). The school expects the alternative provider (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a weekly basis, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP.

9. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in the law and DfE guidance)

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- ♦ Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- ♦ The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's 'Home to school travel and transport' guidance document, or ask the school for a printed copy.)
- ♦ A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- ♦ The pupil is in custody, but still on the school roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities, we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)

10. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a

school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the attendance officer, FLO and/or headteacher to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of a Parenting Contract.

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

Levels of school support:

Prevention:

- ◆ 95 - 100% attendance - class teacher to investigate and notify Headteacher of any concerns. The Headteacher to contact parents if appropriate. Parents will be regularly informed of their child's attendance.

Early Intervention:

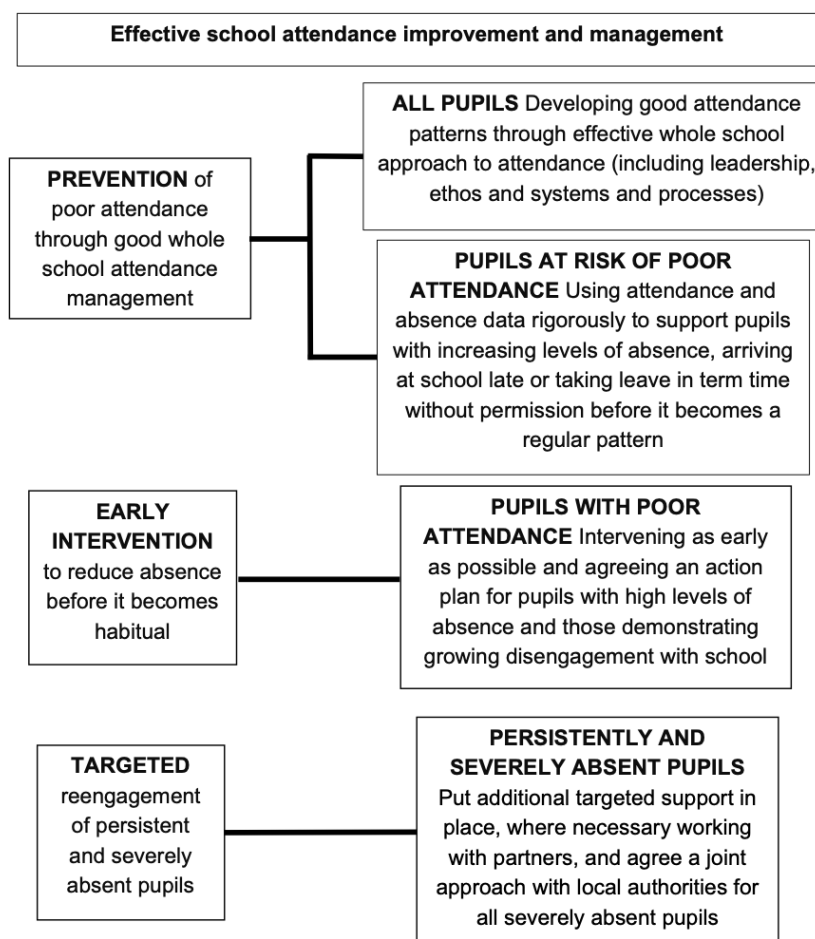
Typically at 90 - 95% attendance, the school will:

- ◆ Support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- ◆ Where barriers are outside of the school's control, the school will work with all partners together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this will 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 will be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

Targeted support:

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

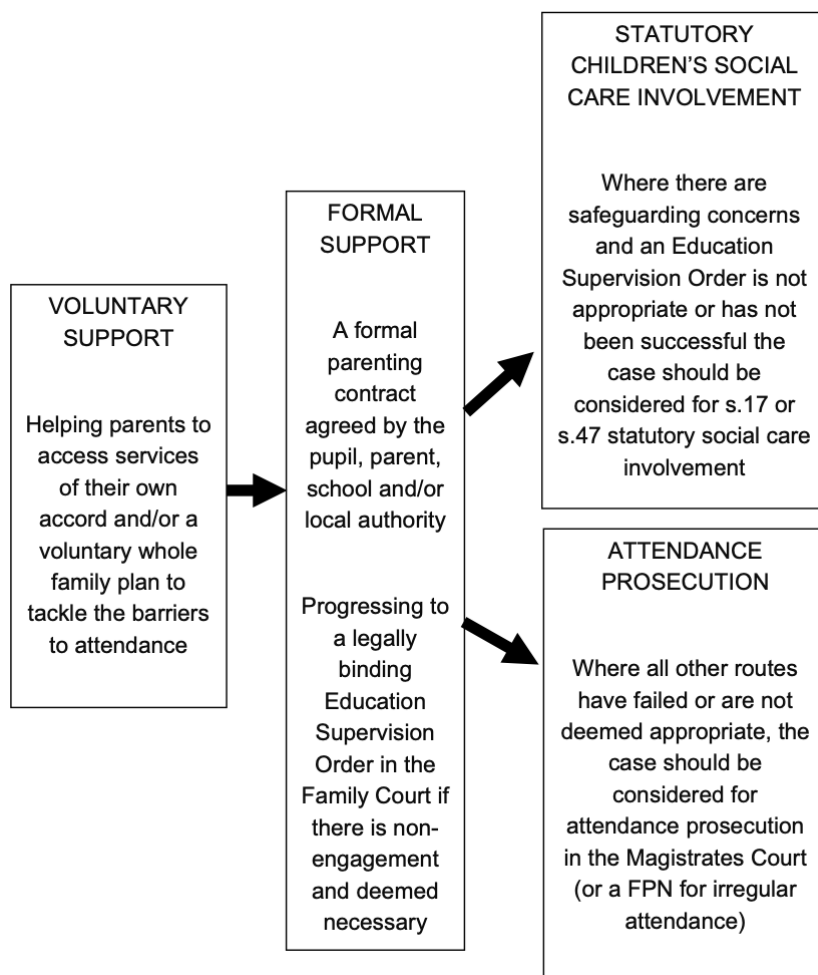
- ◆ If the needs and barriers are individual to the pupil this may include provision of mentoring, careers advice, college placements, 1-2-1 tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision.
- ◆ Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment.
- ◆ Where engagement in support is proving challenging, the school will hold more formal conversations with the parents (and pupil where they are old enough to understand). This is will be led by the head teacher and may include the school's point of contact in the local authority school liaison officer. These meetings will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future but will 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 the school will 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.
- ◆ 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.

See table below.



If our school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. Prior to requesting legal enforcement action, we will ensure that we have followed [Kent County Council's procedures](#).

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

11. Pupils on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

12. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

A pupil's unauthorised absence from school could result in one of the following:

1. A Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 payable within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.)
2. Prosecution.

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or 3 months imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) for more information and Kent County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, available here:

https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/62126/KCC-Penalty-Notice-Code-of-Conduct.pdf (or ask the school for printed copies.)

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

In addition to Penalty Notices, there is a range of other legal interventions open to schools.

Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

- ♦ Parenting contracts
- ♦ Education Supervision Orders
- ♦ Attendance Prosecution
- ♦ Parenting orders
- ♦ Fixed penalty notices

13. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The school will follow [Kent County Council's Children Missing Education Procedures and](#) make CME referrals as appropriate. The school

will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Hub if unsure about any individual cases: 03000 42 33 63 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or cme@kent.gov.uk.

14. Following up unexplained absence

Where no contact has been made with the school, the school will contact parents by email, telephone, dojo message or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 2 school days, we will mark the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts. Where we have been unable to establish the child's whereabouts, we will conduct a home visit.

15. Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels, ensuring that parents/carers are aware if their child's attendance or punctuality falls below acceptable limits.

Standard letters will be sent to parents when lateness or absence reaches a particular level (see appendices for examples of these letters). Where a child's attendance drops below 90%, for whatever reason, our school will write to the parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

16. Roles and responsibilities

(see Appendix Two for more detailed roles and responsibilities)

16.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis (6 times a year). It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Attendance is monitored by the monitoring pair responsible for Behaviour & Attitudes

16.2 The headteacher (designated person)

The headteacher/principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher/principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Debbie Johnson and can be contacted via headteacher@wateringbury.kent.sch.uk. The FLO (Catherina Henry) support the headteacher with many of these responsibilities.

16.3 The local authority

The local authority is expected to:

- ♦ Organise termly Targeting Support Meetings with each school in their area so the school's attendance leads and their point of contact in the local authority's School Attendance Support Team can identify, discuss, and agree joint targeted actions for pupils who are persistently or severely absent and those at risk of becoming so. This should include agreeing what support the LA will provide and which (if any) other statutory or voluntary services should become involved.
- ♦ Use these meetings to build strong relationships and work collaboratively with the school's attendance leads, including providing advice on recording in the register, accessing services or the wider area-wide attendance approach

16.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

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

The attendance officer is Anita Hanley and can be contacted via office@wateringbury.kent.sch.uk

16.5 Family Liaison Officer

The FLO is responsible for:

- ♦ Monitoring attendance with the AO and HT
- ♦ Meeting with parents with the AO to set out expectation and targets
- ♦ Meeting with parents to review progress towards targets
- ♦ Signposting parents to external support.
- ♦ Liaising with external agencies (SLO, EHW) to support families with attendance

16.6 Parent Support Worker

The PSW is responsible for

- ♦ Supporting parents to meet the targets set by school
- ♦ Being a listening ear for the parents
- ♦ Supporting the targets/actions set by the school.

16.7 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at 9am and 1pm. They should add notes to SIMS if they know reasons for the absence.

16.8 School office staff

School office staff will:

- ♦ Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- ♦ Transfer calls from parents to the FLO in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

16.9 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- ♦ Make sure their child attends every day on time
- ♦ Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- ♦ Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- ♦ Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

16.10 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- ♦ Attend school every day on time

17. Policy Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

18. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- ◆ Child protection and safeguarding policy
- ◆ Behaviour policy
- ◆ Suspension and exclusion policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Roles and Responsibilities

All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Not applicable.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.</p>

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.</p> <p>Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children.</p> <p>Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.</p>

Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.	Ofsted considers schools' efforts to improve or sustain high attendance as part of inspections. Multi-academy trusts regularly review attendance data and support schools.	DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making. Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.	DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.

Appendix 3 – Typical ‘late’ letter

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «name» has been arriving late at school. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code L):

«dates_of_lates_before»

Total lates before registration closed: «total_lates_before» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at **8.50** am and at **1** pm.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for your child.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 4 – Typical ‘U’ letter

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has arrived after the register has been closed. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code U):

«dates_of_lates_after»

Total lates after registration closed: «total_lates_after» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at 8.55 am and is closed at 9.15 am for the morning session and taken again at 1 pm and closed at 1.15 pm for the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked ‘U’ which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child’s learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

If «forename» continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 5 – First letter of concern

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was absent.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve «forename»'s attendance. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 6 – Early Intervention meeting

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re: «forename» «surname»

Despite previous warnings, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement. «forename»'s attendance at school is currently «percentage_attendance»% which means «he_she» has missed «total_authorised_absences» half day sessions for authorised absence and «total_unauthorised_absences» half day sessions for unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in «forename»'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness may require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for ?? at ?? It is important that you and «forename» attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by:

??

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and «forename»'s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 7 – Refusal of request for absence

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Request for leave during Term-Time For the attention of the parents of

I have received your request to take «forename out of school for a family holiday between ??date and ??date, a total of ??Number of school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «forename» out of school I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 8 – Notification of penalty notice for not requesting absence

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Request for leave during Term-Time

For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances". *(State why you are treating this absence as a family holiday and/or why there are no exceptional circumstances)*

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively and I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 9 – typical letter following unauthorised absence

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Wateringbury CE Primary School: «forename» «surname» DOB: «date_of_birth»

With reference to our letter dated ??date, the leave of absence taken between ??date and ??date has now been recorded as Unauthorised Absence and as a result a Penalty Notice has been requested.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 10 – typical traveller absence letter

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Traveller Absence

«forename» «surname»

I am writing to say how concerned I am over the number of times forename» has been absent from school. This academic year «forename» has missed «total_authorised_absences» authorised half day sessions and «total_unauthorised_absences» unauthorised half day sessions achieving an overall attendance rate of «percentage_attendance»%.

Traveller children have to attend school for 380 sessions (190 days) each year, which is the same for all children and you are at risk of being referred to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer if «forename»'s attendance falls below 90%. I am unable to authorise any absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances or if you will be travelling for occupational purposes and agree this with the school in advance.

If you would like to speak to me about «forename»'s attendance, please telephone the school to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 11 Leave of Absence Request Form

Leave of Absence Request

The following information comes from KCC and applies to all Kent Schools.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Following this amendment requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances". An "exceptional circumstance" would have to be defined as an unavoidable cause e.g., a one-off emergency situation which prevents the child from attending school.

The Headteacher will consider each request for absence individually but can only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances. There is no right of appeal as the authorisation of the absence is the sole responsibility of the Headteacher. The Headteacher cannot give retrospective approval so any request should be made in advance by least 2 weeks.

Exceptional circumstances may include:

- ◆ Family Trauma, serious illness/death of a close relative/person to the family
- ◆ To attend a wedding of a close person to the family
- ◆ Attending functions in line with culture and or religion
- ◆ Where employer stipulates that holiday has to be taken during a set period (letter from employer is required as evidence)

All requests for leave of absence must be made using this form or the online version. Completed forms must be returned to the school office. Please note that email requests for leave of absence will not be considered unless accompanied by this form. If you require help completing this form, please contact the school office and staff will be happy to assist you.

Although each request will be considered individually, we will never normally authorise leave of absence in term time under the following circumstances:

- ◆ During assessment periods
- ◆ Where the child is persistently absent, including because of ill health (unless certified by medical evidence), existing attendance record will be considered in making the decision whether to grant the leave e.g. absence will not usually be authorised if it takes a pupil's absence record below 90%

Leave of absence taken without the Headteacher's permission, or failure to return on the agreed date, will mean that the absence is unauthorised and marked as (G) unauthorised holiday. The deliberate taking of unauthorised leave in term time may result in parents/carers being liable to a penalty notice. Any leave of 5 school days (10 or more half day sessions) accumulative over a 50 school days (100 school sessions) period may result in a penalty notice. Penalty notices are issued to each parent per child if paid within 21 days increasing if paid between 21 and 28 days. Please see www.kent.gov.uk for up-to-date charges.

Leave of absence taken without any notification to the school will be marked as (O) unauthorised absence and may still result in a penalty notice.



Miss Debbie Johnson
Headteacher



REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME (exceptional circumstances only)

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and all leave requests must be approved by the headteacher before the leave commences.

[Parents/Carers – please complete this form and return it to the school office providing at least two weeks' notice except in emergency or unforeseen circumstances.]

Name(s) of Pupil(s)			
Class(es)			

I request permission for my child(ren) to be absent from school between:

First day of absence	
Date of return	
Total number of school days	
Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the headteacher to consider. (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)	
Evidence attached?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (please give reason)

Declaration

I have read and understood the information about leave of absence during term time, unauthorised absence, and penalty notices. I am aware of the possible consequences should my child take leave of absence without the prior authorisation of the headteacher.

Signature Date
Parent/Carer

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Attendance to date: ____% Absence previously authorised _____ days.

☐ Request authorised ☐ Request unauthorised ☐ Under 5 ☐ Religious/Sporting/Traveller Leave

Headteacher Signature..... Date