ATTENDANCE POLICY

Learning Academies Trust

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LEARNING ACADEMIES TRUST

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CHANGES

Policy date	Summary of change	Author	Version	Review date
01.07.2023	Policy has been created.	Johanne Watts – LAT EWO	1.0	31.08.2024
	Policy reviewed	Johanne Watts – LAT EWO	1.1	31.08.2025
02.09.2025	Policy reviewed- Amendments to… 1.0-Important Contacts- Att Admin added and removal or school champion 8.0- Changed registers open until to registers closed. Added 30 minute timings linked to L and U codes. 9.0- Added phone call home following email of illness.	Cameron Lancaster- LAT Attendance Lead	1.2	31.08.2026

	9.8- 'Suspensions' replaces 'Exclusions' 10.0- Parental responsibility sentence added and on day notification to professionals added. 14.1- Added escalation process section. 14.2- Added Individual Attendance Plan section. 14.3- Added medical evidence section. 16.0- Change Parenting Contract to Individual Attendance Plan. 16.1- LAT Reduced Timetable document added. 20.0- Introduction of floor target. 22.3- Change 'Champion' to 'Leader' 22.5- Change 'Officer' to 'Administrator' 22.5- Added 'records of absence on to CPOMS'. 22.7- Added 'Arbor' and 'CPOMS' recording for Office Staff. Appendix 1- remove H code line. Appendix 2- Updated escalation flow chart and IAP outcomes. Appendices 3-12- Amended and updated letters.			
02.09.2026	Policy reviewed- Amendments to… 5.0- Updated Legislation and Guidance 9.1- Illness- added link to NHS website for parent information. 9.1- Updated wording in relation to medical evidence. 9.4- Change signing out process to inc electronic sign out. 22.1- Roles and responsibilities of Trustees and LGB members. 22.2- Roles and responsibilities of the Headteacher. 22.3- Roles and responsibilities of the Attendance Leader. 22.9- Added Parents roles and responsibilities 23- Added section on attendance monitoring procedures.	Cameron Lancaster- LAT Attendance Lead	1.3	31.08.2027

1. IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Role/ Organisation	Name	Contact Details
School Attendance Senior Leader	Sarah-Jayne Collins	Sarah-jayne.collins@knowle-plymouth.co.uk

School Attendance Administrator	Becky Marshall/ Wednesday Johnson	office@knowle-plymouth.co.uk
Trust EWO	Jeanette Harvey	jeanette.harvey@learningat.uk
Governor with responsibility for Attendance	Tim Smith	tim.smith@knowle-plymouth.co.uk
FLO/Pastoral support for attendance	Nikkita Conniss	nikita.conniss@knowle-plymouth.co.uk
First day calling contact	Wednesday Johnson	01752 365364

2. INTRODUCTION

It is the aim of Learning Academies Trust 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.

3. AIMS

Our school aims to meet its obligations regarding 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 parents[1] 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, considering 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.

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the school will encourage parents of Nursery children, and Reception children who are not yet of compulsory school age, to send their children to every session that is available to them. If the child is unable to attend the school for any reason, the parent should inform the school of the reason on the first day of absence. If the school is concerned about a pupil's attendance for any reason, we will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance.

[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.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory[2] 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 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 can realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality are 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 - August 2017' and 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- December 2023' – or ask the school for printed copies.

We believe that one of the most crucial 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 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.

4. EFFECTS OF NON-ATTENDANCE

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in children missing a substantial 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

[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.

90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

5. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the July 2026 government guidance on Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's updated July 2026 statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures. These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contentsThe Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit

6. 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 schools' 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 (2026 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).

6.1. 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 sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

The school will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or 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 (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

6.2. 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 timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period to support pupils to reintegrate back into education to access fulltime provision. They will only be used with the agreement of professionals and parents, and in the interests of the child. Where used, they will be put in place for the minimum time necessary and regularly reviewed with parents.

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.

6.3. 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 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.

7. WHAT THE LAW SAYS AND OUR SCHOOL PROCEDURES

7.1. CONTENTS OF ADMISSIONS REGISTER

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must be electronic, contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding

parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies.

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

7.2. CONTENTS OF 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 using our Management Information System to record attendance information. School will retain the register for six years from the date of the entry. School will share attendance data with the local authority and the Department of Education to allow better, more targeted support to be put in place as early as possible.

8. PRESENT AT SCHOOL

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 classroom disruption.

The Class Teacher will discuss 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 8.45 am on each school day.

Our morning register is taken between 8.45 am and 9.00 am.

Our afternoon register is taken between 1 pm (KS1) and 1.15 pm (KS2).

A pupil who arrives after the register is taken but before the register closes, will be marked as late (**L**) – this counts as a present mark but the pupil is late to school.

If a pupil arrives **after 30 minutes** of the register opening, 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 (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

8.1. 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 (lesson is 1 hour)
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

9. 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.

9.1. 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 (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk) ' 2024[3] 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 (General Practitioner), 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 to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

Medical evidence may be requested, but not limited to, some of the following reasons:

- **Repeated patterns of illness over a period of time**
- **Repeated illness types**
- **Repeated medical appointments**

School leaders reserve the right to request medical evidence where any patterns of absence are a cause for concern.

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.

Notify school of a child's absence by 8.45 am on the first day they will not be attending. Phone the main school office on 01752 365364. When speaking to staff or leaving a message, please state:

- Your name
- The name of the child

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

- Their Class
- The reason for the absence
- An expected date of return, if possible

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.

If you report your child's absence via email, the school administrative team will phone you to confirm the absence and see if you require any support.

Please refer to the NHS link for parent information on 'Is my child too ill for school?' Is my child too ill for school? - NHS for further information.

9.2. 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 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.

More information about EBSA and resources for support can be found here.

9.3. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

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

The Plymouth 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.

Parents can access independent support and advice about SEND from the Plymouth Information, Advice and Support for SEND (PIAS).

9.4. 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 electronically signed out on the 'signing out' pad. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

9.5. 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 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 in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice 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.

9.6. 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.

9.7. 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.

9.8. SUSPENSIONS

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as a Suspension. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions.

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

The school will notify the parent of the suspension 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 in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

10. FIRST DAY OF ABSENCE RESPONSE

Parents have a duty to report their child's absence from school to the school office. For the first day response, if your child is absent from school with no explanation, a phone call will be made to the first emergency contact. If there is no response a message will be left requesting, contact with school. Following this the other emergency contacts may be contacted. **If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we (School staff or Trust EWO) may conduct a home visit or contact the police to request a welfare check.**

Priority will be given to Children in Care; children subject to Child Protection Plans; children open to Social Care as a Child in Need; children who have previously been reported missing or attendance is a concern. These professionals will be informed each day of the child's absence, if applicable.

Parents will be asked to supply details of **at least three** people who can be contacted in an emergency, and these details will be reviewed on an annual basis through annual parent information forms, parents' evenings and newsletter reminders.

11. REWARDING GOOD AND IMPROVED ATTENDANCE

We will regularly recognise and celebrate good and improving attendance across the school through a range of positive approaches, including:

- Welcoming children at the school gate each morning and reinforcing the importance of attending school regularly.
- Recognising pupils who achieve 100% attendance each week with a sticker and an entry into the end-of-term attendance raffle.
- Holding an attendance raffle six times each academic year, with a range of rewards, including KS1 and KS2 hampers, a hot chocolate treat for a class and the opportunity for a mufti day.
- Presenting weekly attendance awards each Friday, with additional playtime for classes achieving Best Attendance or Most Improved Attendance.
- Regularly sharing attendance information with parents and carers to promote a shared understanding of the importance of good attendance.
- Celebrating attendance achievements and improvements through the school's fortnightly newsletter.

These approaches will be used positively to encourage good attendance, recognise improvement and develop a whole-school culture in which regular attendance is valued and celebrated.

We will send "Attendance Improvement" letters to parents when appropriate.

12. 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, considering 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. On the rare occasion when a refugee family can obtain a visa to return to their country, the school will consider authorising the absence taking into consideration overall attendance and the circumstances the family find themselves in.

Parents must complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four 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 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).

12.1. CHILD IN CARE PROCESS

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.

13. 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 2023 School Attendance Guidance)

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school or specialist provision, 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 setting for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions 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 to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action, as necessary in conjunction with the A

14. 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, but is not limited to:

- 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.
- Illness of a parent or sibling

Unauthorised absences may result in legal sanctions, usually Notices to Improve, Penalty Notices or Prosecutions.

14.1 ESCALATION PROCESS

In line with DfE guidance around unauthorised absences, our school informs and warns parents that their child is at risk of having poor attendance at school and they, as parents, are at risk of Penalty Notices or Prosecution should

pupils reach a certain threshold for unauthorised absences (See section 17). In the Learning Academies Trust, we follow a stepped process to inform, warn and support parents about a pupils unauthorised absences. This process involves phone calls to parents, letters issued and Individual Attendance Plans created. Where we cannot evidence improvements in a pupils unauthorised absences, our school will escalate matters to the next stage. The Trust EWO's may become involved at any stage of the escalation process. Where the school or Trust EWO's have concerns that unauthorised or other significant absence is having an impact on a pupils education, they will refer this matter to the local authority for further consultation. A letter 1, in our escalation process, will always be sent in the first instance regardless of how many unauthorised absences have initially been reported.

14.2 INDIVIDUAL ATTENDANCE PLAN

In most circumstances, prior to an escalation to Penalty Notices or Prosecution, schools will look to hold an Individual Attendance Plan (IAP) meeting with parents. In these meetings, the concerns will be shared, strategies to support discussed and agreed actions set. A follow up review meeting will also be mutually agreed to review the progress made against the objectives and/or actions on the plan. In the first instance, school staff will engage with parents around implementing an IAP. If this plan is unsuccessful or actions are not being met, this will be escalated to the Trust EWO who will implement an IAP in partnership with parents. Progress against the actions/targets on the IAP will be closely monitored by the Trust EWO with next steps actioned based on the outcome of the review meetings.

Where a child's absences reduce during an IAP but increase when an IAP is not in place, demonstrating a lack of sustainability and consistency in attendance, the school/Trust EWO's will consult with the LA EWO team about next steps.

If a child who has an IAP in place is also open to outside agencies through an EHAT (Early Help), CIN (Child in Need) or CP (Child Protection), the IAP will remain in place and run outside any other statutory or non-statutory plan.

14.3 MEDICAL EVIDENCE

When a school may require medical evidence:

Sustained or frequent absences

If a pupil has many sustained and frequent absences or misses school for a prolonged period, the school might have doubts about the reason for the absence. This is unless there are clear extenuating circumstances provided by a health or medical professional.

Unauthorised absence thresholds

If a pupil accumulates a certain number of unauthorised absences within a specific timeframe, medical evidence might be requested to authorise the absence or avoid penalties.

To verify specific reasons

To confirm unavoidable medical appointments, which are a valid reason for absence.

What constitutes medical evidence:

- A doctor's note or statement
- An appointment card
- A prescription
- Other written confirmation from a healthcare professional- GP, Pharmacist, School Nurse etc
- Other evidence of medication being administered.

Schools will communicate with parents, in writing and via a phone call, when their child's absence requires medical evidence and the reason behind this.

The decision to request medical evidence is at the Attendance Leads or Headteachers discretion. They will seek advice from the Trust EWO's in making this decision. Headteachers are aware that there may be mitigating factors that need to be taken into consideration prior to a request for medical evidence being made.

15.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.')

15. 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 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 headteacher or our educational welfare officer to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Individual Attendance Plan (IAP).

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 Plymouth City 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.

15.1. 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. Please refer to the LAT Reduced Timetable guidance document for further information.

16. NOTICE TO IMPROVE, PENALTY NOTICES AND PROSECUTIONS

17.1 NOTICE TO IMPROVE

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.
Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.
They will include:

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

17.2 PENALTY NOTICE

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 several 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 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 £80 payable within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.)
2. 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 Plymouth City Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, available here:https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Final%20Code%20of%20conduct.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.

The national threshold for penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met by any combination of unauthorised absence, for example 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes within 10 school weeks. In addition to Penalty Notices, there is a range of other legal interventions open to schools, trusts, and local authorities. They 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:

- Individual Attendance Plans
- Notice to Improve
- Education Supervision Orders
- Attendance Prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices.

17. CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The school will follow guidance from the DfE Summary of responsibilities for children missing education and Plymouth City Council's Children Missing Education Procedures and make CME referrals as appropriate for children missing education or persistently absent. The school will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Hub if unsure about any individual cases: CME@Plymouth.gov.uk

17.1. SICKNESS RETURNS

Our school will provide the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age, who have been recorded with code **I** (illness) and who the school have reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. This is to help school and the local authority to agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with statutory guidance on education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

18. FOLLOWING UP UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

Where no contact has been made with the school the school will contact parents by telephone, text, email, 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 3 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 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 (School staff or Trust EWO). We will also consider contacting the Police for a welfare check if we are unable to establish the whereabouts of a pupil or there is a safeguarding concern. For pupils with a social worker, school will inform the allocated social worker. **Home visits can be carried out by school staff or Trust EWO's earlier than 3 school days should schools deem this necessary.**

19. REPORTING TO PARENTS

- **Ongoing**: We keep all parents informed about their child's attendance and absence levels via the Arbor App, which all parents are supported with making effective use of.
- **Termly**: At the end of each term, we directly inform all parents of their child's attendance figures up to that date. Schools may choose to issue the pupils year to date attendance certificate.
- **Annually**: At the end of each Summer Term, we directly inform all parents of their child's attendance figures up to that date included within their child's Annual Report.

Where a child's attendance falls below the schools **Trust attendance floor target for 2026/2027**, for whatever reason, our school will write to the parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

20. RECORDING INFORMATION ON ATTENDANCE AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Daily attendance is recorded on a system called Arbor. Any correspondence with you regarding school attendance will be recorded on a system called CPOMS. This will provide a contemporaneous case chronology for the pupil which provides details of conversations, communication, decisions, actions, support offered, impact of any support, referrals to outside agencies, meetings etc. This will be used as evidence by the local authority and inform decision making in respect of any legal enforcement action to be taken.

21. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Attendance of vulnerable groups of children will be identified during a regular attendance meeting held with school staff and our educational welfare officer. Where there is a concern the below will implemented.

- Follow-up action-plans for pupils with low attendance (Individual Attendance Plan)
- Timely liaison with home
- Referral to outside agencies

21.1. THE TRUST BOARD AND LOCAL GOVERNING BODY

The trust board is responsible for monitoring attendance of all trust schools, this is carried out on a termly basis. The Director of Education reports to the Trust Board, outlining the trust data overview linked to all aspects of attendance. The Trust Board holds the Deputy CEO and Education Welfare Officers to account for the implementation of this policy.

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school termly. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

21.2. THE HEADTEACHER

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

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

Specifically, the Headteacher is responsible for…

- The headteacher is responsible for:
- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
- Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

21.3. ATTENDANCE LEADER

The senior leader, or even Headteacher, with responsibility for attendance will offer a clear vision for improving attendance. They will regularly meet with the Trust educational welfare officer. During these meetings individual and group attendance will be reviewed, such as Free School Meals, Pupil Premium pupils, pupils with SEND, Children in Care, attendance by Ethnicity and Language (English/EAL). This is to establish whether any group is experiencing difficulty in attendance.

In addition to the above, the Attendance Leader is also responsible for…

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Sarah-Jayne Collins and can be contacted via telephone 01725 365364 or email sarah-jayne.collins@knowle-plymouth.co.uk

21.4. DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Sometimes absence from school can be part of a safeguarding concern. If this is the case the DSL will be notified and if necessary, take advice from Plymouth children's services.

21.5. ATTENDANCE ADMINISTRATOR

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and educational welfare officer as appropriate.
- Makes call to and arranges meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues. Records of conversations added to CPOMS.
- Co-ordinates requests for term-time leave of absence (this includes liaison with the DSL and Safeguarding Team) and advises the headteacher as requested.

21.6. CLASS TEACHERS

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Class teachers may also make phone calls home when there is a change in attendance. They will also inform parents of attendance at parents evening and school reports.

21.7. OFFICE STAFF

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system, Arbor. Absence reporting may also be added to CPOMS for any children or absence of concern.

21.8. TRUST EDUCATIONAL WELFARE OFFICER

Will meet regularly with school to look at individual and different group attendance, this will highlight any concerns at an early stage. The educational welfare officer will then work with school and families to identify and resolve attendance problems. Meeting parents and pupils at school or home to understand the barriers to school attendance and provide support to bring about improvement in attendance may occur. Should there be no improvement, consideration will be given to issuing a notice to improve which could lead to penalty notice or prosecution.

22.9 PARENTS

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All parents and carers, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with 3 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Sarah-Jayne Collins (Acting Headteacher) or Nikka Conniss (Children and Families Support Worker), who can be contacted via telephone 01752 365364

22. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

23.1 MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

23.2 ANALYSING ATTENDANCE

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

23.3 USING DATA TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs coordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

23.4 REDUCING PERSISTENT AND SEVERE ABSENCE

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

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
    - Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 7, above)

23. POLICY MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Director of Education or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Trust Board.

23.1. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy is linked to our Anti-Bullying Policy, Positive Learning Behaviour Policy, Inclusion Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and the LAT Reduced Timetables Guidance.

24. APPENDICES

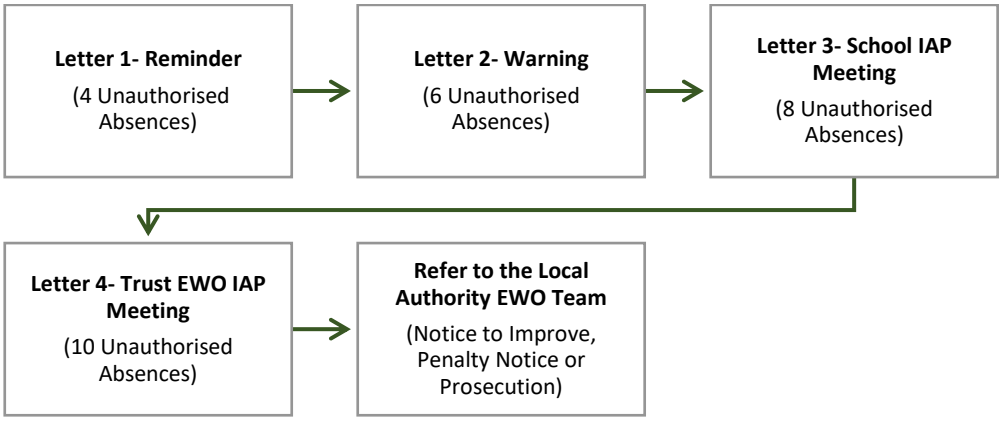
24.1. APPENDIX 1 – DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (DFE) ATTENDANCE CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances	Authorised absence
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part time timetable	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e., present at another school or PRU)	Not counted in possible attendances
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution	Authorised absence
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Not a possible attendance
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence

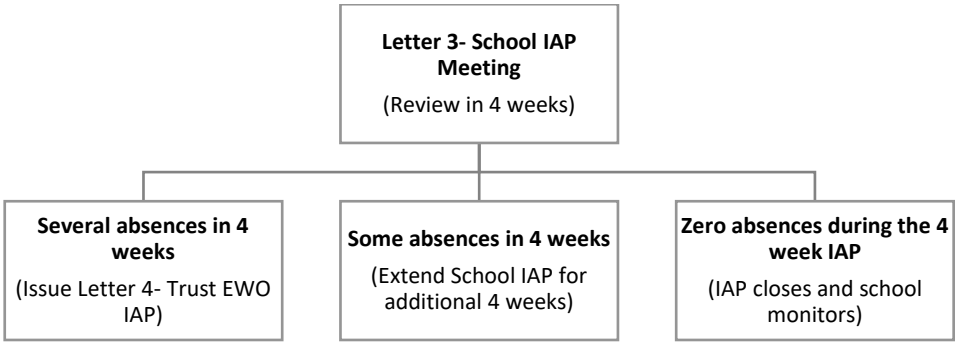
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Authorised absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
X	Non- compulsory school age not required to attend school	Not counted in possible attendances
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not counted in possible attendances
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not counted in possible attendances
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not counted in possible attendances
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not counted in possible attendances
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

24.2. APPENDIX 2 – ESCALATION PROCESS

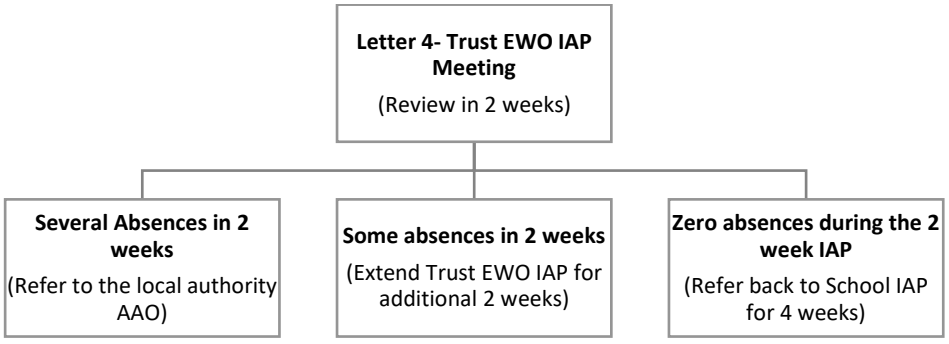
Unauthorised Absence Escalation Process



School Individual Attendance Plan (IAP) Outcomes



Trust EWO Individual Attendance Plan (IAP) Outcomes



24.3 APPENDIX – 3- Letter 1- 4 unauthorised absences- Reminder (SCHOOL LETTER HEADED PAPER)

Addressee
Address
Date

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

We are writing to inform you that your child, XXXX, has currently accrued XXXX unauthorised sessions of absence during this academic year. We fully appreciate that there may be circumstances behind this and want to reassure you that we are here to offer support. If you would like to discuss your child's attendance in an informal and supportive way, please do not hesitate to contact either your child's class teacher, XXXX (Attendance Leader), or XXXX (Family Support Worker).

For your awareness, the Department for Education has recently introduced a new **National Framework for Penalty Notices**, which schools are required to follow:

1. Schools must consider issuing a penalty notice if a pupil reaches 10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10-week period. These absences may be consecutive or non-consecutive and may span across two terms.
2. The penalty fine has now increased to £80 if paid within 21 days. If unpaid, the fine rises to £160 if paid within 28 days.
3. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period, the fine will automatically be £160 with no option to pay the lower rate.
4. If a third offence occurs within the same three-year period, the Local Authority will be required to consider further action to improve attendance.

At XXXXX School, we strongly believe that our community thrives when every pupil attends regularly, arrives on time, and is ready to learn each day. Our vision is to provide a rich and engaging education, and we know that consistent attendance is key to enabling your child to achieve their full potential.

Should this pattern of low attendance continue, we will be in touch again to explore how we can work together to improve attendance. Please be assured that we understand illness and other genuine reasons may affect attendance, and the purpose of this letter is simply to keep you informed of the current unauthorised absences recorded for your child.

Thank you for working with us to support your child's learning. Please do reach out if we can be of any help.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher's Name]
Headteacher

24.3 APPENDIX 4- Letter 2- 6 unauthorised absences- Warning (SCHOOL LETTER HEADED PAPER)

Addressee
Address
Date

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

Further to our previous correspondence regarding your child's attendance, we are concerned to note that XXXX has now accrued XXXX unauthorised sessions this academic year. This is an increase since our last letter.

As shared previously, the Department for Education has introduced a new **National Framework for Penalty Notices**, which requires schools to take further steps where attendance does not improve. To remind you:

1. A penalty notice must be considered once a pupil reaches 10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10-week period.
2. The penalty fine is £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days.
3. A second penalty notice for the same child within a three-year rolling period will automatically be £160, with no option to pay the lower rate.
4. A third offence in a three-year rolling period may result in the Local Authority considering further action to improve attendance.

At XXXXX School, we believe that every child deserves the best possible opportunities to learn and succeed. Regular attendance is essential to achieving this, and our expectation is that all pupils attend school every day unless there are genuine, unavoidable reasons for absence.

We do, however, want to work with you to address any challenges that may be affecting your child's attendance. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact your child's class teacher, XXXX (Attendance Leader), or XXXXX (Family Support Worker). We are available to meet with you and explore how we can support your family to improve attendance.

Please be aware that if this pattern continues, we will need to arrange a formal meeting to consider next steps. Our aim is always to work together with families so that children are in school, on time, and ready to benefit from the education we are committed to providing.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued partnership in supporting your child's learning.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher's Name]
Headteacher

24.3 APPENDIX 5 – Letter 3- 8 unauthorised absences- School IAP meeting (SCHOOL LETTER HEAD PAPER)

Addressee
Address
Date

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

We are writing following our previous correspondence regarding XXXX's attendance. Despite earlier reminders and offers of support, we are concerned to note that the number of unauthorised absences has continued to increase. This is now a matter of significant concern.

Regular attendance is essential to ensuring that children can make the most of the learning opportunities available to them. As outlined in the Department for Education's **National Framework for Penalty Notices**, schools are required to take further action where attendance does not improve. To remind you:

1. A penalty notice must be considered once a pupil reaches 10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10-week period.
2. The penalty fine is £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days.
3. A second penalty notice for the same child within a three-year rolling period will automatically be £160, with no option to pay the lower rate.
4. A third offence in a three-year rolling period may result in the Local Authority considering further action to improve attendance.

In order to address this situation and prevent further escalation, we now invite you to a meeting at school to discuss XXXX's attendance in detail. At this meeting, we will:

- Review XXXX's current attendance record,
- Explore any barriers or challenges that may be affecting attendance, and
- Agree an **Individual Attendance Plan** to support improvement moving forward.

The time and date of the meeting is XXXX. If this is not convenient, please contact the school office to arrange an alternative time.

Our aim is to work in partnership with you so that XXXX can attend school regularly and benefit fully from their education. We believe that, with the right support, together we can achieve a positive outcome.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher's Name]
Headteacher

24.3- APPENDIX 6- Letter 4- Trust EWO IAP (LAT LETTER HEADED PAPER)

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

We are writing to you again regarding XXXX's attendance. Despite our previous letters and discussions, the number of unauthorised absences continues to increase, and we remain very concerned about the impact this is having on XXXX's education.

In order to address this matter more effectively, we are now inviting you to attend a meeting with the **Learning Academies Trust Educational Welfare Officer**, alongside school staff. The purpose of this meeting will be to:

- Discuss the ongoing concerns around XXXX's attendance,
- Identify and agree any further enhanced support that may be required, and
- Implement a **reviewed Individual Attendance Plan** to ensure that XXXX's attendance improves moving forward.

As outlined previously, the Department for Education's **National Framework for Penalty Notices** requires schools to consider further action where attendance does not improve. To remind you:

1. A penalty notice must be considered once a pupil reaches 10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10-week period.
2. The penalty fine is £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days.
3. A second penalty notice for the same child within a three-year rolling period will automatically be £160, with no option to pay the lower rate.
4. A third offence in a three-year rolling period may result in the Local Authority considering further legal action.

The time and date of the meeting is XXXX. If this is not convenient, please contact the school office to arrange an alternative time.

We urge you to attend this meeting so that, together, we can put the right support in place and avoid further escalation. Please contact the school office on XXXXX to confirm your attendance.

We remain committed to working in partnership with you to support XXXX. With regular attendance, we are confident that XXXX will be able to benefit fully from all that school has to offer.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher's Name]
Headteacher

24.3. APPENDIX 7 - Late Letter (OPTIONAL)

Addressee
Address
Date

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

I am writing to share our concern that [Child's Name] has been late to school on [XX] occasions so far this academic year. Regular lateness can have a significant impact on a child's learning, as even a short amount of missed time may mean they do not receive the full benefit of key teaching. It can also make it more difficult for children to settle into the school day, engage fully with their peers, and build confidence in their classroom routines.

We fully understand that mornings can sometimes be challenging, and we are here to work with you should you require any support. If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher, [Attendance Leader's Name], or [Family Support Worker's Name] for an informal conversation.

At [School Name], we believe that every child deserves the best possible start to their day and that arriving on time helps set them up for success. When pupils are in school punctually each day, they are better placed to make strong academic progress, enjoy positive social interactions, and achieve their full potential.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us ensure that [Child's Name] makes the very best of the opportunities available at [School Name].

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher's Name]
Headteacher

24.3- APPENDIX – 8- Medical Evidence Letter (SCHOOL LETTER HEADED PAPER)

Addressee
Address
Date

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

Forename, Surname, year group

We are concerned about the number of medical absences your child has had from school; their education will have been negatively impacted by this.

If you believe that your child has an ongoing medical condition which keeps impacting on their ability to attend school fully, then please talk to us about this and we will consider developing an Individual Health Care Plan with you and any appropriate health care professionals, to support your child with their education. We will look at each child individually where there are exceptional circumstances.

If you consider that there are other matters which impact on your child's ability to attend school regularly, then please contact either your child's class teacher, XXXX (Attendance Leader) or XXXX (Family support worker) who will listen and offer you support.

The NHS (National Health Service) provide guidance Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

From this point on, if your child is absent from school, we must be sure of the reason they cannot attend school. It is therefore important that you provide us with additional information or documentation to enable us to make an informed decision regarding authorisation for each absence.

What constitutes medical evidence:

- A doctor's note or statement
- An appointment card
- A prescription
- Other written confirmation from a healthcare professional- GP, Pharmacist, School Nurse etc
- Other evidence of medication being administered.

It is important that you provide this information or documentation as there is a new National Framework for Penalty Notices published by the Department for Education for unauthorised school absence.

1. Schools must consider a penalty notice for 10 unauthorised sessions in a rolling 10 weeks. This can be any combination of unauthorised absences and can be consecutive or non-consecutive and can span over two terms.
2. The fine has increased to £80 if paid within 21 days, if unpaid it will increase to £160 if paid within 28 days.
3. If a 2nd penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
4. If there is a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider options available to them to improve attendance.

We remain committed to working in partnership with you to support XXXX. With regular attendance, we are confident that XXXX will be able to benefit fully from all that school has to offer.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher's Name]
Headteacher

24.3- APPENDIX 9- Low Attendance- Invite to Individual Attendance Plan meeting (SCHOOL LETTER HEADED PAPER)

Addressee
Address
Date

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

We are writing due to the concerns we have about your child's attendance at school. Currently, XXXX's attendance is XXXX. This is below the Trust Attendance Floor Target for our school and your child is at risk of being deemed as a persistent absentee from school.

The Government defines "persistent absence" as attendance below **90%**. This means that if a child misses the equivalent of one day every two weeks, they are considered persistently absent. Persistent absence can have a significant impact on a child's ability to keep up with their learning, make progress, and achieve their potential.

In order to address this situation and prevent the risk of your child becoming a persistent absentee, we now invite you to a meeting at school to discuss XXXX's attendance in detail. At this meeting, we will:

- Review XXXX's current attendance record,
- Explore any barriers or challenges that may be affecting attendance, and
- Agree an **Individual Attendance Plan** to support improvement moving forward.

The time and date of the meeting is XXXX. If this is not convenient, please contact the school office to arrange an alternative time.

Our aim is to work in partnership with you so that XXXX can attend school regularly and benefit fully from their education. We believe that, with the right support, together we can achieve a positive outcome.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher's Name]
Headteacher

24.3- APPENDIX 10- Letter for improved attendance (OPTIONAL)

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

I am writing to thank you for the improvements we have seen in your child's school attendance. We are very pleased with the progress that has been made and would like to acknowledge the effort you and your child have put into achieving this.

Currently, year to date, XXXX's attendance is XXXX.

Good attendance is key to success in school. It allows children to keep up with their learning, build strong friendships, and make the most of every opportunity. We will continue to monitor your child's attendance closely and celebrate the progress they are making.

Your support has been vital in helping your child reach this point, and we encourage you to continue working with us to maintain the positive improvements so far. Together, we can ensure your child achieves their very best.

Thank you once again for your commitment to your child's education.

Yours sincerely,

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher's Name]
Headteacher

24.3- APPENDIX 11- Positive attendance letter (OPTIONAL)

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

I am writing to acknowledge and celebrate your child's excellent school attendance. We are delighted to see such a strong commitment to being in school every day, and I would like to thank you for the vital role you play in making this possible.

Currently, year to date, XXXX's attendance is XXXX

Good attendance is one of the most important factors in supporting your child's learning and progress. When pupils attend school regularly, they not only achieve more academically, but also build positive friendships, develop confidence, and gain the skills they need for future success.

Your continued support in ensuring your child arrives at school every day, on time, is greatly appreciated. Together, we can help maintain these high standards and ensure your child makes the very best of the opportunities available to them here at [School Name].

Thank you again for your commitment to your child's education.

Yours sincerely,

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher's Name]
Headteacher

24.3- APPENDIX 12- Information letter re attendance to parents (OPTIONAL)

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

The Importance of Good Attendance at School

At [School Name], we place great importance on regular attendance, as it plays a vital role in your child's learning, progress, and overall success in school. Every day in school provides valuable opportunities for children to learn, develop skills, and build relationships with their peers.

What does good attendance look like?
A full school year has 190 days. Good attendance means that your child is in school at least **95% of the time** – this allows them to access the curriculum fully and make the best progress possible. For example:

- **95% attendance** = missing about 9 days across the whole year.
- **90% attendance** = missing about 19 days across the year – almost 4 weeks of learning lost.
- **80% attendance** = missing about 38 days across the year – over half a term of learning missed.

Currently, year to date, XXXX's attendance is XXXX

Persistent Absence
The Government defines "persistent absence" as attendance below **90%**. This means that if a child misses the equivalent of one day every two weeks, they are considered persistently absent. Persistent absence can have a significant impact on a child's ability to keep up with their learning, make progress, and achieve their potential.

How we can help
We understand that there are times when children may not be able to attend school due to illness or other unavoidable circumstances. However, we are here to support families wherever possible to ensure that attendance remains high. If you are experiencing any difficulties in getting your child to school, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are always willing to listen and to work with you to find practical solutions.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us to provide the very best education for your child. Together, we can ensure that every child has the best possible chance to succeed.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher's Name]
Headteacher

24.4. APPENDIX 13 – EWO REFERRAL

Education Welfare
Case Work Referral and Chronology

Child's details: **Date Referred:**

Name:		School:		Current Attendance:
DOB:		YG:		Date of Referral:
Address:				
EHCP	SEN	Health Need	CP	CIN
TAM	Lead Professional: Contact number:	EHAT	Lead Professional: Contact number:	

If yes to any of the above, please provide details in the reason for referral section.

Parent/Carer details

Name:	Relationship to child:
Address: Postcode:	
Home number: Mobile number:	Email address:
Name:	Relationship to child:
Address: Postcode:	
Home number: Mobile number:	Email address:

	Date Sent	Attendance %	Copy attached √
Green Attendance Letter Sent			
Amber Attendance Letter Sent			
Red Attendance Letter Sent			
Reason for referral:			

Chronology

School Key Staff

Name	Designation	Email	Contact number

Any Other Agency Contact details

Name	Agency and Designation	Email	Contact number

Reason for referral & action taken by school so far

Referrer details :

Referred by:	Role:	Date:	Signed:

Date	**%**	**Action**	**Recorded by**
	%		
	%		
	%		
	%		
	%		

25. GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE August 2024)
Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE December 2023)
Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Keeping children safe in education (DfE September 2023)
Keeping children safe in education 2023 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE January 2015)
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviourhttps://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendanceandattendance

School census guidance and regulation

Complete the school census - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE July 2014)
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-tohttps://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidanceschool-travel-and-transport-guidance

Children Missing Education Procedures (Plymouth City Council November 2022)
https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/children-missing-education

Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (Plymouth City Council March 2023)

Penalty-notice-request-guidance-for-schools-2023.docx (live.com)

Alternative Provision Guidance (Plymouth City Council March 2023)

Children Missing Out on Education and Alternative provision | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK

OTHER RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Education Act 2002 (legislation.gov.uk)

Children Act 1989 (legislation.gov.uk)

Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (legislation.gov.uk)

Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (legislation.gov.uk)

Education and Inspections Act 2006 (legislation.gov.uk)

Sentencing Act 2020 (legislation.gov.uk)

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (legislation.gov.uk)

The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007 (legislation.gov.uk)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (legislation.gov.uk)

The Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013 (legislation.gov.uk)

Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (legislation.gov.uk) and Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (legislation.gov.uk)

Equality Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk)

RELEVANT GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

Children missing education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Elective home education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Alternative provision - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Preventing bullying - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Providing remote education: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)