ST TERESA OF CALCUTTA MAC ATTENDANCE POLICY 2026-2027

The Rosary Catholic Primary School

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Document History			
Version	**Date**	**Author**	**Note of Revisions**
1.0	June 2024	St Teresa of Calcutta MAC	
2.0	May 2025	St Teresa of Calcutta MAC	Updated Statutory References: Dates revised to reflect the latest guidance. Added access to external specialist attendance consultants (CSAWS). Included reference to Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). Added “pilgrimages or religious visits” to circumstances not considered exceptional for term-time leave. Replaced “FAST-track to Attendance” with Support First to reflect Birmingham City Council’s current framework.
	January 2026	St Teresa of Calcutta MAC	Additional amendment to include afternoon registration times in line with DfE guidance as advised by CSAWS (Section 3.0).

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3.0	May 2026	St Teresa of Calcutta MAC	Updated Statutory References: Dates revised to reflect the latest guidance. Additional amendment to include time when pupils are considered 'late' for afternoon registration as advised by Birmingham City Council (Section 3.0) Strengthened links between attendance and safeguarding in Section 6.0. Section 8.0: • Addition of Sections on 'Truancy in School' and 'Alternative Education Providers'. • Section with reference to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils has been rewritten in line with Working Together to Improve Attendance to reflect reference to 'Mobile Pupils.' Additional school-specific information around 'Promoting Good Attendance' (Section 9.0) as advised by Birmingham City Council. Section 12.0: • Under 'Voluntary Support', change of wording from 'Early Help will be considered' to 'Early Help will be offered'. • Changes made to 'Formal Attendance Contract' section to align with Birmingham City Council's Support Frist Framework. • Under 'Removal from School Roll' date of Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations updated from 2006 to 2024.

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CONTENTS

SECTION	SECTION TITLE
1.0	Policy Introduction
2.0	Policy Aims
3.0	Attendance – Key Information
4.0	Statutory Information
5.0	Links to School & MAC Policies
6.0	Expectations of Schools
7.0	Roles and Responsibilities
8.0	Specific Attendance Information
9.0	Promoting Good Attendance
10.0	Monitoring Attendance
11.0	Sharing Attendance Data
12.0	Absence Support
13.0	Frequently Asked Questions

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This Policy applies to all schools within St Teresa of Calcutta MAC.

For the purpose of this policy, a parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

For the purpose of this policy, St Teresa of Calcutta Multi Academy Company is referred to as the MAC.

1.0 POLICY INTRODUCTION

For most pupils, the best place to be during term-time in is school, surrounded by the support of their friends and teachers. This is important not just for a pupil's learning, but also for their overall wellbeing, wider development and their mental health. Missing out on education has a significant effect on a pupil's life opportunities.

We recognise that some pupils will find it harder than others to attend school. At all stages of improving attendance, St Teresa of Calcutta MAC and individual schools will work with pupils and parents to remove attendance barriers by building strong and trusting relationships, working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance is not, therefore, solely the preserve of a single member of staff, or school. Securing good attendance requires a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the MAC, the school's local governing body, Birmingham Local Authority, local partners, parents and pupils themselves.

2.0 POLICY AIMS

- To promote and attain high levels of pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- To safeguard pupils and maintain a culture of excellent attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure attendance procedures in all MAC schools adhere to statutory requirements.
- To ensure all stakeholders understand expectations and the legal processes in relation to attendance.
- To ensure consistency in managing pupils attendance across the MAC.

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3.0 ATTENDANCE - KEY INFORMATION

This information is pertinent to our school and will be different for each school within our MAC.

School Day Timings

8.15am	This is the time your child may enter school from.
8.45am	This is the time your child must be in school by, if your child arrives after this time in the morning, they will be recorded as late.
9.30am	This is the time you should contact school by calling 0121 464 4519 and choosing the option for attendance if your child is absent from school.
9.15am	Arriving after this time will result in your child be marked as absent.
1.30pm	This is the time afternoon registration is taken.
2.00pm	If your child arrives after this time in the afternoon, they will be recorded as late.
3.30pm (2.30pm on Friday)	This is the time school day ends. Your child is expected to remain in school until this time.

Attendance Team Details

Sarah Robinson	This is the name and contact details of our Senior Attendance Champion.
Joe Perkins **Smira Mahmood**	These are the names and contact details of our Attendance Support Team. These staff assist with the management of attendance and can assist with day-to-day attendance queries.

Absence

Anne Norris	This is the name and contact details of the member of staff to contact to request a leave of absence for your child.
1 month	This is the amount of notice required for requesting a leave of absence.
	This is the form which needs to be completed to request a leave of absence Policies - The Rosary School
10 or more sessions (5 days)	This is the threshold of absence for unauthorised reasons. When this threshold has been reached, the school will consider issuing a fine.
£160	This is fine issued to each parent. This will reduce to £80 if paid within 21 days.
2 fines	This is the number of fines (per parent) allowed within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could receive a fine of up to £2,500.

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Education Supervision Order	This is applied for where Birmingham Local Authority believe a parent needs support getting your child to go to school and they are not co-operating. A supervisor will be appointed to help a parent get their child into education. Birmingham Local Authority can do this instead of, or as well as, prosecuting you.
Prosecution	This means a parent has to go to court. A parent could get a fine, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court could also give a parent a Parenting Order.

4.0 STATUTORY INFORMATION

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents to ensure children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs the child may have.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

A parent/carer who fails to ensure that their child attends school regularly is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

This Attendance Policy adheres to the statutory requirements outlined in the Department for Education's Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026).

The MAC has considered individual needs when formulating this Attendance Policy, including having regard to the MAC's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

5.0 LINKS TO SCHOOL/MAC POLICIES

A number of MAC and individual school policies make reference to pupil attendance expectations, such as:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Pupil Premium Policy
- Home School Agreements

This list of policies is not exhaustive and this Attendance Policy does not replace the general requirement of an individual MAC or school policy.

6.0 EXPECTATIONS OF SCHOOLS

All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school.

To manage and improve attendance effectively, all schools are expected to:

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- Ensure the MAC's Attendance Policy is clearly understood by staff, pupils and parents and ensure strategies are in place to promote and implement this Attendance Policy throughout the school.
- Recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
- Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for improving attendance and tackling persistent absence.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance ensuring all teaching and non-teaching staff are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents.
- Recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.
- Recognise that children missing education, including those with persistent or irregular attendance, part-time timetables or repeated removal from lessons, may indicate unmet need or safeguarding risk, rather than solely a behaviour concern.
- Understand that patterns of absence may signal exposure to contextual risks (including exploitation, online harm and peer abuse); therefore attendance concerns will be addressed within the school's safeguarding framework, with clear pathways for early help, DSL oversight and multi-agency working where appropriate.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools within the MAC, the local area, Birmingham Local Authority, and other partners where absence is of concern and is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

We believe successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly, requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with families. Schools will:

Expect	We aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
Monitor	We rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
Listen & Understand	When a pattern is spotted, we discuss attendance with pupils and parents. We listen to and understand barriers to school attendance. We work with pupils and parents together to resolve the difficulties.
Facilitate Support	We facilitate support in order to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This will always include an offer of early help and may include a whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
Formalise Support	Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, we and local partners will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

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Enforce	Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, the school, supported by the MAC, will enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

7.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Birmingham City Council are responsible for issuing all penalty notices, court orders and education supervision orders in relation to school attendance.

The MAC Board has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this Policy and for ensuring compliance with relevant statutory documentation or MAC policies. The MAC Board has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating this Policy to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), each school's Local Governing Body and the Headteacher of each school. The MAC Board receives regular attendance update on the effectiveness of this Policy. The Policy is formally reviewed on an annual basis.

The MAC's School Improvement Team:

Under the direction of the CEO, the MAC's school improvement team will:

- Ensure that this Attendance Policy is kept up to date in line with statutory requirements and best practice.
- Set and review MAC attendance targets as part of the MAC's School Improvement Strategic Strategy and School Improvement Framework.
- Analyse attendance data for all schools within the MAC and to circulate regular attendance dashboards.
- Support individual schools with promoting good attendance and tacking pupil absence.
- Support with Stage 4 persistent absence meetings with parents.
- Provide termly opportunities to bring together staff from different schools to learn from each other's attendance expertise and share effective interventions. This will be done through Termly Attendance Lead Meetings and Termly Supervision for Attendance Leads.
- Consult with an external specialist attendance support provider (CSAWS) to advise them on how to effectively support schools in improving attendance outcomes.
- Provide school leaders with access to external specialist attendance consultants (CSAWS) for targeted support, including casework and the development of attendance systems, allocated based on identified needs.

The Local Governing Board (LGB)

The LGB will:

- Support the school leaders in the successful implementation of this Attendance Policy.
- Review the effectiveness of this Attendance Policy within their school setting.
- Share information as requested by the MAC Board of Directors.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure there is a senior leader with responsibility for attendance. In a small school, this may be the Headteacher. This senior leader with responsibility for attendance is referred to as the 'Senior Attendance Champion'.
- Ensure there is a Senior Attendance Champion within their school setting.
- Ensure their school promotes and celebrates good attendance and punctuality.

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- Determine, in collaboration with the Senior Attendance Champion, whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the school's official request form, or absences for which no request was made/approved. It is the responsibility of each Headteacher to decide whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Such decisions will be made in accordance with current Department for Education regulations and policy.
- Comply with the requirements set out by Birmingham Local Authority when requesting issuance of penalty notices.
- Comply with the Department for Education Statutory Policy on Children Missing Education
- (CME) by informing Birmingham Local Authority of the details of children who are regularly absent, or missing from school following a leave of absence, and prior to removing a child from the roll of the school.
- Provide the MAC's CEO and school improvement team, LGB and MAC Board with regular updates on attendance and punctuality in accordance with MAC's agreed procedures as outlined in this Policy.
- Ensure staff are accurately completing attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Ensure training on attendance is included in the school's continued professional development offer for all staff, and that attendance is covered as part of new staff induction programme. Attendance training must include:

    - Names of staff within the school who have additional responsibility for attendance (School Senior Attendance Champion and the attendance support team) and their roles.
    - The importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances.
    - The law on school attendance and the requirements of schools, including the law on the keeping of pupil registers.
    - The school and MAC's strategies and procedures for promoting good and tackling absence, including the staged approach for persistent absence.
    - The processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.

- Ensure dedicated attendance training is provided to any staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. These staff would be your school's Senior Attendance Champion and your attendance support team. Attendance training for these staff must 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.

The Senior Attendance Champion

Supported by the wider school attendance team, the Senior Attendance Champion will:

- Share the MAC's and School's vision for improving and maintaining good attendance with staff, parents and, where appropriate, pupils.
- Establish and maintain effective systems for promoting good attendance and for tackling absence, based on guidance within this Policy.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the School's strategies and processes.
- Ensure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Ensure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding.
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and, supported by the attendance team, to communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Develop initiatives to promote good school attendance and to tackle school absence.
- Oversee the arrangements for attendance review meetings and quality assure attendance support plans.
- Liaise with internal and external agencies to support with attendance, as required.

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- Share information and work collaboratively and in partnership with other MAC schools, the Local Authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and Policy.
- Lead attendance review meetings for pupils persistently absent at Category 4.

Attendance Support Team

The structure of the attendance support team will vary between MAC schools and will be informed on the size of the school, the attendance needs of pupils and the resources available.

The attendance support team will:

- Provide attendance information to the Senior Attendance Champion as and when required.
- Will supported the Senior Attendance Champion to analyse school attendance for patterns and trends, both for groups of pupils and for individual pupils.
- Monitor registrations daily and follow up attendance concerns in line with policy and procedures.
- Be the first point of contact for parents and relevant school staff regarding pupil absence and appointments.
- Collate, monitor and share attendance in line with the MAC's Policy.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels in line with MAC's protocols. They will notify parents where attendance is becoming a concern.
- Manage the arrangements for pupils who need to attend appointments during school time.
- Work in partnership with the Senior Attendance Champion to track pupils who are, or are at risk, of being persistently absent.
- Manage initiatives to promote good school attendance and to tackle school absence.
- Facilitate support by leading attendance review meetings and create an Attendance Support Plan for pupils persistently absent at Category 3. *In creating an Attendance Support Plan, staff will listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, staff will take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches*.
- Co-ordinate the support plan for pupils returning to school after a prolonged absence.
- Maintain a record of all applications for leave of absence during term time and requests for issuing a penalty notice.
- Co-ordinate the collation of all documentary evidence required by Birmingham Local Authority for issuing a penalty notice or prosecution by Birmingham Local Authority for unauthorised absence.

Staff responsible for registering morning and afternoon sessions will:

- Provide regular advice, encouragement, challenge and support to the class as a whole and individually to pupils about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in line with the school's procedures.
- Ensure that the statutory attendance register (using the electronic MIS system) is taken at the first session of the school day and once during the second session. In secondary settings, for the purposes of safeguarding, registers will be taken at the beginning of each lesson.
- Be alert and deal with any signs of disaffection which could result in poor attendance.
- Identify absence trends or concerns and raise with the relevant member of the Attendance Team.

All Staff

- All staff across the MAC will work with young people and their families to ensure all pupils attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done through:
- Raising awareness of the effects of absence and lateness.
- Supporting the systems to monitor absence and to address any underlying barriers.
- Promoting incentives and rewards that acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping.

Parents

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We ask parents to:

- Be aware that it is an offence for their child to be absent from school without a valid reason (See Section 6) and so unnecessary absences should be avoided.
- Be aware that only the school can determine if an absence from school is 'authorised'.
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time, dressed in full uniform and ready and equipped to learn.
- Promote the importance of regular attendance at home.
- Using the school's procedure to inform the school (every day) when their child is unable to attend, including the reason for absence and the expected date of return.
- Ensure that all appointments, where possible, are arranged after the end of the school day.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.
- Avoid arranging holidays/leave during term time except in exceptional circumstances.
- Ensure that all requests for leave (including appointments) during term time are made by completing the 'Leave of Absence During Term Time Request Form, where possible at least one month in advance.
- Be aware that for unauthorised absences, the school reserves the right to apply to the local authority to issue a penalty notice (fine) or remove a child from the roll of the school.
- Inform the school in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live.

Pupils

Pupils will:

- Aim to achieve 100% attendance and punctuality by arriving to school on time every day.
- Come to school well prepared to enjoy and achieve.
- Be proud of achieving excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Be punctual to all lessons.
- Ensure they are registered for all timetabled lessons and inform the relevant member of staff if they are not able to be registered.
- Ensure all notes/appointment cards are passed to the relevant member of staff.
- Speak to the appropriate member of staff if there are any problems that may affect attendance, punctuality and/or learning.
- Follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the school late.

8.0 SPECIFIC ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

Registration

The school will ensure that an attendance register is taken at the published time of the first session of the school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must electronically record whether every pupil is:

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

Registers will be marked using the Department for Education Attendance and Absence Codes.

Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.

Where appropriate, an agreed internal code maybe be used to indicate a pupil is being educated on site but not in their usual lesson e.g., isolation. A comment should accompany the mark to indicate the location of the pupil. The internal code should only be used for lessons not sessions.

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If the electronic means of taking the register is not available, the attendance team will ensure paper registers are issued, completed, collated and entered on the electronic system in a timely manner once available.

First Day Absences

On the first day of absence and each day of absence, parents should contact the school office before the published start time of the school day to inform them of the reason for the pupil's absence and the likely duration of the absence. Parents should contact the main office on 0121 464 4519 and select the option for attendance. Parents should give the name of the child and their class and the reason for the absence.

Where no information has been received by the established start time of the school day on the first day of absence, the school will contact the priority contacts of the absent pupil to enquire regarding the absence and will contact everyone on pupil contact list in priority order to establish contact. This may be by text and/ or phone call. The school reserves the right to conduct a home visit to check on the absence of a pupil. This may be conducted by members of school staff and/or an agency appointed by the school.

Parents should contact the school every day until the pupil returns to the school or alternatively indicate the length of the absence, and the reasons why the pupil will be unable to attend e.g., recovering from an operation. In these circumstances a 'check in' date must be agreed when the absence will be reviewed.

Failure to provide sufficient evidence of the absence reason when requested, may result in the absence being marked as unauthorised. In these circumstances legal interventions may be considered.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, not the parent/carer, to decide whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Such decisions will be made in accordance with the latest Department for Education policy and guidance.

Appointments

All appointments, where possible, must be arranged after the end of the school day.

Parents should provide advance notice by way of a medical card and/or letter for any time off school required for medical appointments. The school reserves the right to ask for proof of appointment and to unauthorise this absence.

Time away from school as a result of an appointment must be kept to a minimum. Pupils should not be absent for the whole day/whole morning/whole afternoon where this can be avoided.

A member of the attendance team will manage appointments, keeping the School Attendance Lead informed of authorised and unauthorised appointments.

Pupils leaving school during the school day

Pupils are not permitted to leave the school unescorted during school hours for any reason. This includes when pupils are suspended or are unwell. Pupils should only be collected from school by an appropriate known adult, ideally a parent or carer. The only exceptions to this rule would be:

- Where a pupil is on an agreed, regularly reviewed, reduced timetable.
- Where permission is given by parents in writing to attend a scheduled appointment.

Where a pupil cannot be collected from the school by an appropriate known adult or parent, or cannot be contacted, the school will make arrangements for the pupil to remain in the school until the end of the school day. Should the pupil be taken home during the school hours, the pupils will be taken home in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The care of the child must be handed over to an appropriate known adult, ideally a parent/carer, in the family home.

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If a pupil is displaying dangerous behaviours, the school would contact the Police. Any decisions made in this regard should always be communicated with parents/carers.

Term time leave and holidays

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013 prohibits the Headteacher of a school from granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an advance application has been made by the parent and the Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

The request for leave of absence must be made at least one month in advance by completing the 'Leave of Absence During Term Time Request Form'. The form is available from the school's reception. A copy is also available online Policies - The Rosary School. Each case will be considered on merit, taking into account the individual facts and the exceptional circumstances.

For the purpose of defining 'exceptional circumstances' and as a guiding principle only, the Headteacher may consider it to be exceptional if the reasons given for requesting leave are **rare, significant, unavoidable and short**. The following factors will also be taken into consideration when considering requests for leave of absence during term time:

- Whether the event for which leave of absence is requested can reasonably take place during school holidays.
- Levels of attendance and unauthorised absence over the last 12 months.
- Any leave of absence taken previously.
- Whether the leave is during the examination period, controlled assessment period or will result in not meeting assessment deadlines.
- age and year group of the pupil.

The school will not consider the following to be exceptional circumstances:

- The availability of cheap holidays.
- The availability of the desired accommodation.
- An overlap at the beginning or end of the school term.
- Pilgrimages or religious visits which can be arranged outside of term time.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will decide the number of school days a pupil can be away from school, and the agreed date of return to school.

Where a leave of absence is **not** granted or where the pupils fails to return to school by the agreed date following approval of leave of absence, then the Headteacher will consider passing on the details to Birmingham Local Authority in line with the duty around reporting children missing education.

The Headteacher may request Birmingham Local Authority to issue each adult with parental responsibility with a penalty notice if their child is absent from school and their absence is unauthorised.

In certain circumstances, the school, after notifying Birmingham Local Authority, may decide to remove the pupil from the roll of the school.

Persistent absence (PA)

According to the Department for Education guidelines, a pupil will be considered as a persistent absentee if their attendance is 90% or lower (i.e.10% or more sessions are missed which is equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year).

Any pupil who is at the persistent absence threshold or at risk of moving towards that threshold is placed on the school's Attendance Risk Register and their attendance is tracked.

Each school will have an Attendance Risk Register divided into four categories:

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- Category 1: Pupils moving towards the persistent absence threshold of 90%. These will be pupils whose attendance is less than 92% but above the threshold of 90%.

- Category 2: Pupils who are persistently absent (attendance of 90% or less) and whose **absence is not problematic** for the school. Their persistent absence would be judged as '*low risk'*.

- Category 3: Pupils who are persistently absent (attendance of 90% or less) and whose **absence is problematic** for the school. Their persistent absence would be judged as '*medium risk'*.

- Category 4: Pupils who are persistently absent (attendance of 90% or less) and whose absence is **extremely concerning** for the school. Their persistent would be judged as ' *high risk'*.

Severely Absent (SA)

Particular focus will be given to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. These pupils will be prioritised for support.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by the school, local authority, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. The school will be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and will act in accordance with their Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Children Missing Education

Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter and will be dealt with following procedures in our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

A pupil going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. When a pupil's absence is unexplained, the school will contact the parents on the first day of absence. If the absence remains unexplained, the school will try to establish the pupil's safety and whereabouts. The school will make reasonable enquiries such as ringing all emergency contacts. The school will make a child missing in education referral as soon as possible when they have had no contact from a family, but no later than when the child has been missing from school for **20 days** in the following circumstances:

- A pupil has left the country regardless of if a new address and/or new school information has been provided.
- There is reasonable evidence to indicate a pupil has moved out of the Birmingham local area and their whereabouts are unknown.
- Where a pupil is reported or believed to have moved to a different Local Authority area but is not confirmed to be on a school roll in the new area.
- Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, and reasonable enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of a pupil and the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Truancy within school

Our school monitors attendance to each lesson period of the school day using the registers, in order to ensure all pupils are safe in school and whereabouts known. If a pupil does not present to scheduled lessons/activities, the Attendance Officer is informed and staff alerted to find missing pupils. If pupils

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cannot be located and are suspected of leaving school premises, parents will be informed and the police notified of a missing child.

Alternative Education Providers

On rare occasions, a small number of pupils may be accessing an alternative education provider or dual registered with another school, agreed by the school for all or part of their timetable. In this instance the pupil remains on roll at our school. Attendance to approved alternative providers is monitored. When Pupil are Dual registered at another school or alternative provider their attendance will be recorded in the register as a D code (on days they are required to attend the other school/provision). The other school/provision will record the attendance of absence. For children who are Educated Off site but not dual registered their attendance will be recorded in our school register under a B code if they are confirmed present or the appropriate absent code if absent. The responsibility of ensuring pupils are safeguarded and receiving appropriate education remains with our school.

Mobile Pupils

The MAC recognises that some pupils may be mobile. A mobile pupil is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place. The pupil will typically be travelling with their parent(s) as part of this work. Schools should not unnecessarily ask for proof that parent(s) are travelling for occupational purposes. This should only be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason for absence given. Where such doubt exists, the school may request evidence that the family is required to travel for occupational purposes during the period of absence.

To support continuity of education, where parent(s) are travelling for occupational purposes within England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school in the area in which they are staying. In these circumstances, the pupil should be dual registered at that school and their main school.

Parents may, in some circumstances, present a defence against prosecution under section 444(6) of the Education Act 1996. This applies where the child has no fixed abode and the parent can demonstrate that they are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place, and that the child has attended school as regularly as that trade or business permits. If the child is aged 6 or above, the parent must also demonstrate that the child has attended school for at least 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months. This is in addition to the requirement that attendance must be as regular as the trade or business permits; where the nature of the trade or business allows the child to attend more frequently, they are expected to do so.

Each child must attend school as regularly as their parent(s)' trade or business permits. Children aged over six must attend school for at least 200 sessions in each rolling 12-month period.

The school will continue to promote and secure the highest possible levels of attendance for all pupils, including mobile pupils, and will work with families to minimise disruption to education wherever possible.

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, schools will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This will include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in

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place an individual healthcare plan where needed. Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate.

- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, schools will work with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.
- Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensuring appropriate pastoral care is in place (where needed) and whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate.

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

Some pupils may struggle to attend school due to emotional or mental health difficulties, known as emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA). In these cases, absence is often a reflection of unmet emotional needs rather than a behavioural choice. Schools will respond with sensitivity, adopting a trauma-informed approach and working closely with families and external professionals to identify needs early and put in place tailored, non-punitive support. This may include reasonable adjustments, phased reintegration plans, and access to mental health services.

In all cases, all schools will be sensitive and will avoid stigmatising pupils and parents. The voice of the pupil and parent is paramount in developing individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

Part-time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable will not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable will only be in place for the shortest time necessary and will not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme, or other agreement, will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or at an alternative provision. There will be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a parttime timetable, the school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and they will treat their absence as authorised.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school will keep them informed and involved in the process. If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school will discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and will record the absence accordingly (normally using code X or C2).

The MAC school improvement team will monitor the use of part-time timetables within the MAC. Part-time timetable data will be shared with the school's local governing body and the MAC's Board of Directors.

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9.0 PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

The school will proactively promote good attendance using a variety of strategies appropriate for their individual school setting. Engagement with pupils will help to establish whether an incentive scheme would be helpful and what incentives, if any, would be appropriate. Incentives may include; attendance rewards, attendance displays and attendance assemblies. Any praise or reward system will be used sensitively and staff will be mindful that incentive schemes used in an inappropriate way can demotivate, and in some cases, may cause distress to pupils who have been unable to attend school for complex reasons.

At The Rosary Catholic Primary School we celebrate and promote good attendance through half termly rewards which allows every child the opportunity to achieve a short-term goal.
Recognition is given at the end of the year to children with exceptional attendance.
To improve attendance on special occasions such as birthday's, children are given the opportunity to wear their own clothes so as to encourage attendance on these days.
For children, at risk of poor attendance, a programme of support with Mrs Robinson is implemented monthly with rewards given at the end for improved attendance.

10.0 MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Daily Monitoring

The attendance support team will:

- Ensure that any pupil who arrives after the register has been taken, signs in at the reception office.
- Ensure the attendance register is updated with details of pupils who arrive late.
- Ensure details of pupils, and the reasons for the late arrival, are communicated to the identified attendance team in school.
- Ensure electronic attendance registers are taken by the published time. Should the electronic attendance register system not be available, issue paper registers and ensure the electronic register is updated as soon as possible.
- Ensure accurate details are noted of parents contacting the school about their child's absence – including the reason for the absence and the likely length of absence.
- Contact parents by telephone who fail to notify the school of their child's absence by the published start time of the school day, on the first day of absence. Inform a designated member of staff where the whereabouts of a pupil has not been established by the time set out in the school's procedures.
- Contact by phone or text, all parents of pupils arriving late to the school, informing them of their child's failure to arrive on time.
- Ensure no pupil is allowed to leave the school for an appointment without the presence of a parent and appropriate authorisation.
- Make follow-up phone calls to parents of absent pupils who have been identified as at-risk, to challenge absences and encourage early return to the school.
- Authorise appointments in line with this policy.
- Escalate any absences causing concern to the school leader responsible for attendance.

Regular monitoring

The Senior Attendance Champion, supported by the school's attendance support team will:

- Monitor and evaluate the Attendance Risk Register and will record any notes or actions on this register.
- Analyse the Attendance Risk Register to identify trends and patterns.
- Review the monthly attendance dashboard produced by the MAC.
- Use attendance analysis to provide regular attendance reports to school leaders, class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Monitor the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings should will be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.

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11.0 SHARING ATTENDANCE DATA

All MAC schools will work with local communities (including voluntary and community groups) to help remove the barriers to attendance that families experience. In some cases, families will experience the same or similar barriers to attendance for multiple children who attend different schools in the area. As such, it is of mutual benefit for such schools to work together where possible. This will be particularly beneficial in supporting transition between feeder schools.

In addition, all schools are also legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

- **New Pupil and Deletion returns**: notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times.
- **Attendance returns**: providing the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U).
- **Sickness returns**: MAC schools 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 has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year. This is to help the school and local authority to agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with the statutory guidance on education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

Birmingham Local Authority may seek, and MAC schools are expected to provide, more frequent or comprehensive sharing of data than the statutory minimum where it is essential to fulfilling their obligations under the Education Acts and the expectations set out in Chapter 4 of the DfE's 2024 '*Working together to improve school attendance'*.

The law also allows local authority officers access to the attendance and admission registers of all types of schools to carry out their functions under the Education Acts to support joint working between schools, trusts and local authorities. These officers are also permitted to take digital or physical extracts.

MAC schools will also provide specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State for Education. This requirement is met by having an electronic management information system containing the required information that can be accessed by the Department for Education.

Pupils with a social worker and/or youth offending team worker

To facilitate effective working across the local authority area, MAC schools will inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school. The school's attendance support team will also inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if their name is to be deleted from the school register.

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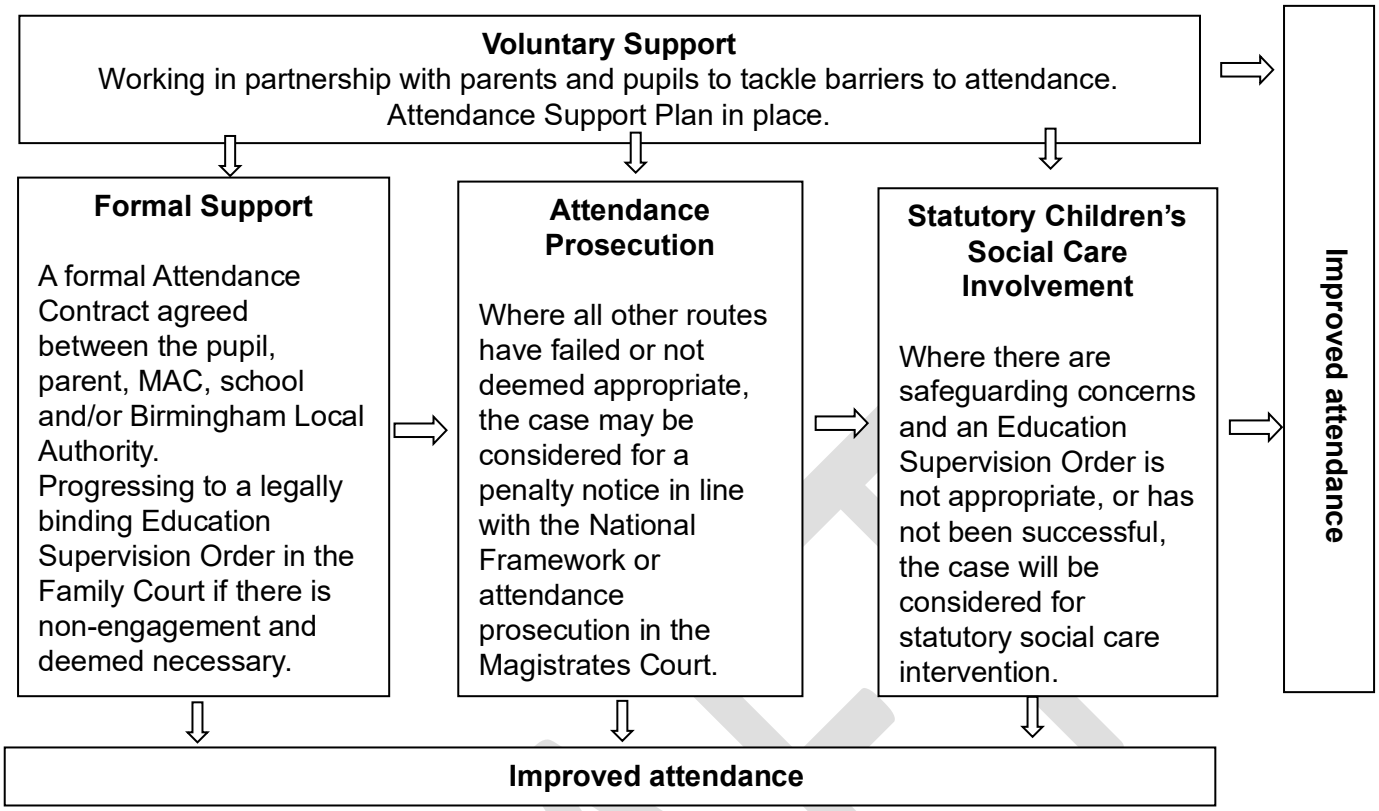
12.0 ABSENCE SUPPORT

Providing Support Before Attendance Legal Intervention



This support outlined below is informed by Birmingham City Council's *Support First School Attendance Framework and Guidance* (September 2025) and the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (August 2024).

Voluntary Support

Where attendance or punctuality becomes problematic and raises concerns (deemed as Category 3), then a meeting with the pupil and parents will be arranged. During this meeting, an **Attendance Support Plan** will be created.

The meeting will:

- Discuss the concern and the impact of absence.
- Discuss the causes of absence or lateness.
- Discuss what support can be offered to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Agree achievable and realistic attendance and punctuality targets.
- Set a review date.
- Early Help will be offered.

This approach to early intervention and support aligns with Step One of Birmingham City Council's *Support First* model, focusing on collaborative engagement with families to address attendance concerns.

Formal Support

Where attendance or punctuality becomes extremely concerning (deemed as Category 4), then a **Formal Attendance Meeting** with parents will be arranged and a formal attendance contract will be sought.

Our procedures reflect Steps Two and Three of Birmingham's *Support First* framework, incorporating formal attendance contracts as a supportive measure prior to considering legal action.

Formal Attendance Contract

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An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school and/or local authority to address irregular attendance at school. An attendance contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where the voluntary Attendance Support Plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents are not compelled to enter an attendance contract, and an attendance contract cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.

In line with the Support First Pathway in Birmingham, the school will offer an attendance contract before moving forward to an education supervision order or prosecution.

The aim from the outset should is for the parent(s), and the pupil (where appropriate), the school, the MAC and Brimingham Local Authority to work in partnership. A meeting will be arranged to explain the purpose of an attendance contract and why using one would be beneficial in the family's circumstances. The parent(s) will be asked to outline their views on the pupil's attendance at school, any underlying issues and how they believe these should be addressed. The meeting will also allow them to share their views on the idea of an attendance contract and what type of support they think would be helpful to secure the pupil's regular attendance. Where a parent fails to attend the meeting without good reason or notification, further attempts will be made to contact them and arrange another meeting; all attempts at support will be recorded.

An attendance contracts will contain:

- Details of the requirements the parent(s) is expected to comply with.
- A statement from the school and/or local authority agreeing to provide support to the parent(s) to meet the requirements and setting out details of the support.
- A statement by the parent that they agree to comply with the requirements for the period of time specified by the contract.

The requirements specified, and the support provided, will depend on the individual case, and will be tailored to the needs of the individual parent and family. There is not, therefore, a prescribed list, but requirements may include:

- Measures to ensure the pupil attends school or alternative provision punctually and regularly.
- Requiring the parent to attend meetings with the school and/or local authority.
- Accessing or partaking in the support or programmes offered.
- Working with or accessing other separate support provided to the pupil at school level (e.g. being on report)

Each individual attendance contract will set out the duration it will be in place, and should be for 10 weeks in line with Birmingham City Council procedures.

Once the requirements and support elements of the attendance contract have been agreed, the school, the MAC and/or local authority and the parent will write up the contract together and sign it. The attendance contract will be written in language that the parent can easily understand (including a translation where necessary). All parties, including other partners working with the family, will be given a copy.

Failure by the parent, school, MAC or local authority to keep to the terms of the attendance contract cannot lead to action for breach of contract or for civil damages. There is no criminal sanction for a parent's failure to comply with, or refusal to sign, an attendance contract. If the pupil's irregular attendance continues or escalates to the point where prosecution is deemed appropriate, however, any failure or refusal may be presented as evidence in the case.

Re-integration of pupils following long term absence

The school recognises the key role it can play in ensuring successful reintegration of pupils returning after a prolonged period of absence. The school will work in partnership with parents and external agencies (if appropriate), to assist a smooth reintegration back into school, ensuring a flexible approach to meeting the pupil's needs.

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All relevant staff will be informed of the child's circumstances and a member of staff will be nominated to oversee the pupil's return.

Where appropriate, the pupil's peers will also be included to ensure they support the pupil's reintegration.

Persistent Absence – Birmingham *Support First School Attendance Framework and Guidance*

Birmingham City Council's *Support First School Attendance Framework and Guidance* (September 2025) is for all schools, academies and alternative providers and independent schools in where there are concerns about unacceptable levels of individual pupil absence. It seeks to improve pupil attendance and act quickly where there is unauthorised absence.

Penalty Notice

There are only a few circumstances where a pupil is allowed to miss school, such as illness or where the school has given permission because of an exceptional circumstance. If a pupil misses school without a good reason, local councils and schools can intervene and issue parents with a penalty notice.

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices will be considered by all MAC schools where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence.

All MAC schools will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case. The MAC does not operate a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices; individual schools will make judgements on each individual case. The threshold for issuing a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week period, as per the national framework.

A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g.10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

When a school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, the school will consider:

• *Is support appropriate in this case?*

If yes, the school will continue with the existing support without a penalty notice or issue a Notice to Improve if that support is not working or is not being engaged with. A penalty notice can be issued if either has not worked.

If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice will be issued subject to the other conditions below:

- Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?
- (For local authorities only) Is it in the public interest to issue a penalty notice in this case given the local authority would be responsible for any resulting prosecution for the original offence in cases of non-payment?

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

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Persistent Absence – Education Supervision Order

An Education Supervision Order can be used in order to work with families and schools, often with the support of external agencies, to secure a return to regular attendance. The use of Education Supervision Orders as a supportive measure before considering prosecution, in accordance with the 'Support First' framework.

An application to secure an Education Supervision Order is heard by the Family Proceedings Court where Magistrates have the power to grant the order.

The fine for school absences across England is £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.

Repeat Offences and Two Penalty Notice Limit

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, in line with national guidelines, only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Notices to Improve

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve would usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support.

A Notice to Improve would not normally be issued in cases where support is not appropriate or where it is judged a Notice to Improve would have minimal impact.

The Notice to Improve will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and details of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.
- A clear timeframe for the improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks.
- Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

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

Removal from School Roll

Schools will only remove compulsory school aged children from the roll of the school under certain circumstances defined in Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

For removal from roll for elective home education (EHE), schools will liaise with Birmingham Local Authority before removing a child from the roll of a school.

13.0 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What happens if my child arrives after the published registration time?

The school will mark the child as late with a U code.

What does each percentage of absence mean?

The tables below equate percentage attendance to time missed from school.

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

Table 2: Attendance over 5 years for each pupil:

Attendance	Missed Weeks

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85-90%	19 weeks = ½ year absence from school
80%	38 weeks = 1 full year absence from school

Why is regular school attendance so important for my child?

Regular attendance at school means that your child can make the most of their education and improve their chances in adult life.

School can also help your child's social skills such as making and developing friendships. A regular and punctual attendance pattern will help your child when they enter the world of work.

The link between attendance and attainment in school is clear. The more a pupil is in school the more they increase their opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Why is punctuality important?

Schools are legally required to take a register of pupils first thing in the morning and at some point in the afternoon..

If a pupil is late but the register is still open, they are marked as late. If the register has already closed when a pupil arrives late and without a satisfactory explanation, they will be classed as an unauthorised absence. This may lead to legal action for not ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.

Punctuality is important because if, for example, a child arrives 15 minutes late at school each day, they lose almost 2 weeks of education a year.

Why should we avoid holidays during term time?

The law states that parents do not have a right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time. Only in exceptional circumstances may a Headteacher grant permission for leave. The majority of holiday absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Is my child too ill for school?
It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school when they're unwell.

There are government guidelines for schools and nurseries about managing specific infectious diseases at GOV.UK. These say when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't.

If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school on the first day. Let them know that your child won't be in and give them the reason.

If your child is well enough to go to school but has an infection that could be passed on, such as a cold sore or head lice, please let the school know.

The NHS recommend: (updated April 2021)

Coughs and colds: It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or common cold. But if they have a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly.

High temperature: If your child has a high temperature, keep them off school until it goes away.

Chickenpox: If your child has chickenpox, keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.

Cold sores: There's no need to keep your child off school if they have a cold sore. Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone while they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels.

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Conjunctivitis: You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have conjunctivitis. Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.

COVID-19: If your child has mild symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, and feels well enough, they can go to school. Your child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have symptoms of COVID-19 and they either:

- have a high temperature
- do not feel well enough to go to school or do their normal activities

Your child is no longer required to do a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test if they have symptoms. But if your child has tested positive for COVID-19, they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test.

Ear infection: If your child has an ear infection and a high temperature or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling better or their high temperature goes away.

Hand, foot and mouth disease: If your child has hand, foot and mouth disease but seems well enough to go to school, there's no need to keep them off. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues straight away and to wash their hands regularly.

Head lice and nits: There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. You can treat head lice and nits without seeing a GP.

Impetigo: If your child has impetigo, they'll need treatment from a pharmacist or GP, often with antibiotics. Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment. Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and not to share things like towels and cups with other children at school.

Measles: If your child has measles, they'll need to see a GP. Call the GP surgery before you go in, as measles can spread to others easily. Keep your child off school for at least 4 days from when the rash first appears. They should also avoid close contact with babies and anyone who is pregnant or has a weakened immune system.

Ringworm: If your child has ringworm, see your pharmacist unless it's on their scalp, in which case you should see a GP. It's fine for your child to go to school once they have started treatment.

Scarlet fever: If your child has scarlet fever, they'll need treatment with antibiotics from a GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks.
Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

Slapped cheek syndrome (fifth disease): You don't need to keep your child off school if they have slapped cheek syndrome because, once the rash appears, they're no longer infectious. But let the school or teacher know if you think your child has slapped cheek syndrome.

Sore throat: You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat. But if they also have a high temperature, they should stay at home until it goes away. A sore throat and a high temperature can be symptoms of tonsillitis.

Threadworms: You don't need to keep your child off school if they have threadworms. Speak to your pharmacist, who can recommend a treatment.

Vomiting and diarrhoea: Children with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days (48 hours).

What should I do if I'm worried about my child's school attendance?

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The first thing to do is to contact the school to discuss your concerns.

What are my responsibilities regarding my child's school attendance?

As a parent it is your responsibility to ensure that any child of compulsory school age attends school both regularly and on time. The local authority has a duty to make sure that all parents fulfil this responsibility.

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