Inspire Partnership

Inspire Partnership Academy Trust

Chattenden Primary School

Chattenden Primary School

Attendance Policy

Date of Last Review:	**September 2026**
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1. Introduction

1.1. At Chattenden Primary School, we aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to strive for excellence. For a child to reach their full potential and experience every opportunity the school has to offer, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils, and their parents or carers, the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

1.2. The senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance (Senior Attendance Champion) in is:

Name: Vicky Diddams

Position: Headteacher

Contact details: Telephone: 01634 250861 Email: office@inspirechattenden.co.uk

1.3. The member of school staff parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Name: Stephanie Sherwood

Position: Office Administrator

Contact details: Telephone: 01634 250861 Email: office@inspirechattenden.co.uk

1.4. The Attendance Officer that parents should contact for more individual support with attendance is:

Name: Nicola Carpenter

Position: Home School Support Worker

Contact details: Telephone: 01634 250861 Email: office@inspirechattenden.co.uk

2. Aims

2.1. This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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

3. Legislation and guidance

3.1. This policy meets the requirements of the Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE). This document is drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

It also refers to:

- Keeping children safe in education 2026.
- Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools.
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.
- Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement.
- Providing remote education: guidance for schools.
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.
- School census guidance.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring their child regularly attends school is the parents/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

4.2. **The parents/carers**

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 natural parents, 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/carers are expected to:

- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this to the child
- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school or report via Arbor their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number 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 Nicola Carpenter, via 01634 250861 and/or office@inspirechattenden.co.uk

4.3. **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, unless they are too ill to do so

4.4. **School office staff**

School office staff are expected to:

- Take phone calls/emails from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on Arbor
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to Nicola Carpenter (HSSW) where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

4.5. **The Attendance Officer**

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring registers have been completed correctly and accurately
- Completing daily attendance checks, including absence and lateness follow up in accordance with the school policy
- Reporting the absence of Looked After Children to Laura Stickings (SENCO)
- Ensuring all correspondence related to attendance is sent out in a timely manner and is recorded systematically in Arbor
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 13)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with Medway AASSA and Inspire Attendance Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Nicola Carpenter and can be contacted via 01634 250861 and/or office@inspirechattenden.co.uk

4.6. **Board of Trustees**

Trustees will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the trust's ethos and policies, which are regularly reviewed for effectiveness
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help trust leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual cohorts or schools who need it most
- Ensure effective practice is being shared between schools within the trust
- Hold the Trust Education Leaders accountable for monitoring and reviewing this policy.

4.7. **Trust Education Leaders**

Trust Education Leaders will be responsible for:

- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and 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
- 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
- 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

4.8. **Local Community Councils will**:

- Set high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- 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

4.9. **The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Local Community Council termly
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Working with the parents 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 through all available channels
- Meeting parents
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising Stephanie Sherwood (Attendance Officer) to be able to do so
- 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
- Make a sickness return promptly when a compulsory-school-age pupil recorded using code I is expected to miss at least 15 consecutive school days, or has missed or is expected to miss at least 15 school days through sickness during the school year.

4.10. **The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is 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 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 Vicky Diddams and can be contacted via 01634 250861 and/or office@inspirechattenden.co.uk.

4.11. **Class Teacher**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis using the correct codes using Arbor
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality with all children
- Communicate concerns with attendance and punctuality with the attendance officer or designated leader

5. Recording attendance

5.1. Schools are legally required to keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. The register will be marked twice a day: at the start of the school day (morning session) and after lunchtime ends (afternoon session).

5.2. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Admission and attendance registers will be backed up at least monthly. Backup copies will be retained for six years after the end of the school year to which they relate.

The school day starts at 8.55am and ends at 3.15pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

5.3. **Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via 01634 250861 and/or office@inspirechattenden.co.uk, or through the parent Arbor app

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Medical evidence will not be requested automatically after a set number of days. Requests will be proportionate, where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about illness or evidence would help support prolonged or recurring illness. Available evidence will be discussed with the family.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

5.4. **Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

All requests for leave need to be submitted in writing/email to the Headteacher

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 8 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

6. Lateness and punctuality

6.1. Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed, miss vital learning and important messages from their class teacher. Every minute a child is late to school can add up to a lot of learning time over the year.

6.2. The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Chattenden Primary School are:

- The children can arrive at 8.45 am, when the gates open
- The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.30am
- The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm
- The end of the school day is at 3.15 pm

6.3. How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at 8.45am when children can begin to come into school
- Registers are taken at 8.55am and your child will receive the appropriate attendance code mark if they are not in by that time
- Children arriving after 8.55am are required to come into school via the school office. They must be accompanied by a parent/carer who must sign them into our 'Late Book' and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded
- At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive the appropriate attendance mark that shows them to be on site
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding lateness
- From time to time a member of school staff will undertake a 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school

6.4. Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with members of the Attendance Team, but you can approach us at any

time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

7. Absence Procedures

7.1. First day absence

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If a child is absent, parents/carers must contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence.

If a child is absent the school will:

- Telephone or text the parent/carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them – this is because we have a duty to ensure the child's safety as well as their regular school attendance
- Invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation if absences persist and this is deemed appropriate
- Refer the matter to the local authority attendance advisory officer if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%
- The response will reflect each pupil's safeguarding risk. Concerns about any pupil will be referred promptly to the DSL, with immediate action where required. Staff must not wait for a specified number of days before raising a safeguarding concern.

7.2. Second day absence

If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers on the second day of absence, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact. This will include making enquiries to known friends, wider family and undertaking home visits. The DSL will determine whether a home visit, contact with children's social care or police involvement is appropriate, based on assessed risk and local safeguarding procedures. This action may be necessary on the first day.

7.3. Ten days' absence

The school will report pupils failing to attend regularly and pupils with at least ten continuous school days of unauthorised absence, in accordance with regulation 12 and agreed LA reporting arrangements. Safeguarding concerns will be escalated earlier where necessary. The school will work with the LA to establish the pupil's whereabouts and circumstances.

7.4. Continued or ongoing absence – Persistent absence

A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and cooperation of parents/carers to resolve this. Projected PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our attendance system. All our PA children and their parents/carers are subject to an Intervention Plan. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Attendance Advisory Officer and some cases may lead to legal action being initiated.

Some children may have acute health conditions which, despite the best efforts of parents and carers, lead to significant ongoing periods of absence. We will work closely with parents/carers to ensure we develop support systems which enable each child to attend school as often as physically possible. Children should never be excluded from school or activities on medical grounds unless they are acutely unwell or hospitalised.

Where health needs prevent attendance, the school will work with the family, relevant professionals and the LA to secure suitable education. Arrangements will reflect individual circumstances and may include hospital education or other provision. We will maintain close links with children and their families during any sustained periods of absence to ensure continuity of relationships and provision. Children in recovery can be supported by a flexible return to schooling which is manageable for them.

Families of children with acute physical and medical conditions that lead to pervasive absence will not follow the same systems and procedures laid out in this policy.

7.5. **Reporting to parents**

Parents will receive information about their child's attendance at Parent Consultation Evenings and in their child's end of year report

7.6. **Deletion from roll**

For any pupil leaving Chattenden Primary School, other than at the end of Year 6, parents/carers are required to email our school office. This provides the school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency.

Under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, all schools are now legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five school days of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school unless the local authority has requested these returns.

A pupil's name will be deleted only when all conditions of an applicable statutory ground are satisfied. The school will record the ground and supporting evidence and complete joint reasonable enquiries with the LA where required. A leaving form does not itself authorise deletion. Where all Ground G conditions are met, a replacement school place is not required before deletion.

8. Authorised and unauthorised absence

8.1. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance

at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

8.2. The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare, significant, unavoidable and short term situations judged on a case by case basis.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and before the absence, and via the office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school

- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

8.3. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

8.4. Unauthorised absence includes, however, this list is not exhaustive:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using the most appropriate code'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session
- shopping trips
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- their own or family birthdays
- holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher - may result in school applying to the local authority to issue a penalty notice or if you have previously been issued a penalty notice, the school may request a direct prosecution by the local authority
- day trips
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed

8.5. As of 1st September 2013, there has been a change to The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations Act 2006. Headteacher's may no longer grant a 'Leave of Absence' in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore, any such absences not deemed as exceptional circumstances will be unauthorised. Holidays or overseas trip absences in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking students away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday/overseas trip in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. Because of the damage to your child's learning caused by this, we do not authorise any holidays/overseas trips in term time, unless in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the headteacher.

9. Penalty notices and sanctions

9.1. Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

9.2. **Penalty notices**

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Reaching the national threshold requires consideration of a penalty notice; it does not result in an automatic fine.

A penalty notice may be issued to a parent where there is reason to believe that the parent has committed the relevant attendance offence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

If a **second** attendance penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within the relevant three-year period is £160, payable within 28 days, with no reduced rate. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

For these exclusion-related notices, the penalty is £60 within 21 days, or £120 within 28 days.

9.3. **Notices 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

10. Understanding barriers to attendance

10.1. Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local

Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individualised early help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

10.2. 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, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

11. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

11.1. Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

- School will practice relational context and listen without judgement to try and find solutions to persistent absenteeism through early conversations to understand the root causes
- When absence stems from broader challenges the school will promote engagement with Early Help and Family Solutions support
- Attendance Clinics will be held to discuss issues face to face
- School will encourage engagement with multi agency partnerships

11.2. Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

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

The school will make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, whether or not they have an education, health and care plan. Support will reflect individual needs and be reviewed with the pupil and parents. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

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

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

- Provide the LA with details of pupils who will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs
- Encourage the pupils to stay in contact with other learners during their absence

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

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

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments
- Use assessment tools to support with identifying possible additional needs
- Identifying learners' unmet needs through the Early Help process
- Using an internal or external specialist
- Considering an exceptional temporary part-time timetable in accordance with section 14.2.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and break times
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out
- Temporary late starts or early finishes
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs

11.3. **Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence**

The school will agree to a reintegration plan with the pupil and parents. This will identify a named contact, support for wellbeing and relationships, arrangements to address missed learning and review dates. Relevant professionals will contribute where appropriate.

Remote education may be considered as a last resort where attendance is not possible but the pupil can learn. It will support continued education and reintegration. The appropriate absence code will still be recorded.

12. Strategies for promoting attendance

12.1. At Chattenden Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

12.2. The school will:

- Ensure that all new parents are introduced to the Attendance Policy and information on attendance will be in the school welcome pack.
- Use the weekly newsletter to update the school community about the week's attendance and promote good attendance.
- Individual parents will be approached where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Maintain and promote a set of class rules which refer to punctuality and readiness for learning.
- Recognise attendance improvement and positive engagement through fair and inclusive arrangements. Pupils will not be penalised for absence related to medical conditions, and reasonable adjustments will be made where required.
- Maintain and update records within the Arbor system.
- Liaise with the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP) during regular monitoring visits to identify attendance concerns.
- Use interventions, such as the Individual Attendance Plan to develop strategies and targets for families to improve attendance.
- Ensure pupils are rewarded for good and improved attendance in a variety of ways

13. Attendance monitoring

13.1. Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance weekly to identify emerging concerns and evaluate support, alongside fuller half-termly, termly and annual analysis.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, including young carers.

Pupil-level absence 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 compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Local Community Council.

13.2. Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

- Conduct thorough analysis of weekly, 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

13.3. **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 it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 13.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the Local Community Council and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, 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

13.4. **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 9, above)

14. Further information

14.1. **Home Education**

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from school in favour of home education. Parents must inform the school of their decision to home educate in writing. The school will apply the relevant statutory deletion ground and stated leaving date and notify the LA. A school attendance order may prevent deletion. LA consent is required where a pupil attends a special school under arrangements made by the LA. It is important that the decision to home educate is discussed and considered carefully. Parents will not be pressured to home educate. Talk to the school about any difficulties your child may be having; once your child has been taken off roll their place will be allocated and may not be available to your child if you change your mind at a later date.

14.2. **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.

Arrangements will last only as long as necessary, form part of a support or reintegration plan and be agreed with the parent the pupil normally lives with. They will have review dates and a proposed end date. Involve any social worker and discuss EHCP cases with the LA. Record absence appropriately. Part-time timetables will not be used to manage behaviour.

15. Monitoring arrangements

15.1. It is the responsibility of the Local Community Council to monitor overall attendance. They request a termly report from the Headteacher. The Local Community Council also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Local Community Council will, therefore, examine closely information provided for them and seek to ensure that attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school keeps accurate attendance records through a computerised registration system (Arbor).

The rates of attendance are reported in the school prospectus and in the annual Local Community Council's report.

16. Links with other policies

16.1. This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1 - Attendance codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another school where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		

C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Leave for a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad, meeting the applicable licensing or exemption conditions
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Compulsory-school-age pupil absent under an agreed exceptional temporary part-time timetable.
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes. A mobile child meets the regulation 3 definition, including no fixed abode and parental occupational travel.
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend because the statutory access conditions in regulation 10 are met

Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: · In police detention · Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or · Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent - unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes. Replace within five school days; use O if still unexplained.
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session

Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Prospective pupil not yet entered on the admission register
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

VERSION CONTROL (TO BE REMOVED PRIOR TO PUBLICATION)

Reference	Details
Section 2.1	Updated the attendance guidance reference to Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026).
Section 3.1	Replaced the 2006 pupil registration regulations reference with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Updated the guidance list and links, including KCSIE 2026, children missing education, medical conditions, health needs, exclusions, remote education, mental health and school census guidance.
Sections 4.9 and 11.2	Clarified reporting to the local authority for 15 days of sickness absence, consecutively or cumulatively. Section 4.9 now specifies prompt sickness returns, compulsory school age, code I, school days and expected absence.
Section 5.2	Added requirements for monthly electronic register backups and retention for six years from the end of the relevant school year.
Section 5.3	Replaced the automatic request for medical evidence after five days of absence with a proportionate, individual assessment of whether evidence is needed.
Sections 7.1 and 7.2	Revised first- and second-day absence procedures to prioritise safeguarding risk, prompt DSL involvement and proportionate home visits or police contact according to the circumstances.
Section 7.3	Clarified action after ten continuous school days of unauthorised absence, including local authority reporting and joint enquiries. Added earlier safeguarding action where concerns arise.
Section 7.4	Replaced the assurance of automatic hospital-school provision with wording about suitable education based on the pupil's individual circumstances.
Section 7.6	Updated admission and deletion procedures to the 2024 Regulations. Clarified five-school-day admission returns, the standard-transition exception, lawful deletion grounds, supporting evidence and joint enquiries with the local authority.
Section 9.2	Clarified that reaching the national threshold triggers consideration of a penalty notice. Corrected wording about the parent's offence, second notices within three years (£160, without an early-payment reduction) and possible prosecution for non-payment. Recorded exclusion-related fines of £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.
Section 11.2	Added reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, including those without an EHCP, and a cross-reference to the temporary part-time timetable arrangements in section 14.2.
Section 11.3	Expanded reintegration planning to include a named contact, wellbeing support, missed learning, reviews and relevant professionals. Added wording on remote education as a last resort.

Section 12.2	Replaced blanket attendance rewards with inclusive recognition of improvement and engagement, taking account of medical absence, disability and equality considerations.
Sections 13.1 and 13.2	Added weekly attendance analysis and explicit consideration of young carers when monitoring pupils and groups.
Sections 13.3 and 13.4	Corrected 'severed absence' to 'severe absence' and changed the sanctions cross-reference from section 5.2 to section 9.
Section 14.1	Clarified elective home education procedures, including lawful removal from roll and leaving dates, school attendance orders, local authority consent for relevant special-school placements, and avoiding pressure on parents to home educate.
Section 14.2	Expanded temporary part-time timetable safeguards: parental agreement, a support plan, regular reviews, an end date, social worker and EHCP-related local authority involvement where applicable, and correct attendance coding. Clarified that these arrangements must not be used to manage behaviour.
Appendix 1	Updated the descriptions of attendance codes D, C1, C2, T, Q, N and Z, including temporary part-time timetables, occupational travel, access arrangements, the five-school-day deadline for resolving code N, and pupils not yet on the admission register.