KINGSTONE ACADEMY TRUST

APPROVED DOCUMENT

Attendance Policy	
Relevant School/s:	**KTPS**
Policy Officer:	**Mrs Amy Preece**
Approval:	**Delegated**
Date of Review:	**September 2024**
Next Review:	**3 years or upon legislative change**
Distribution:	**Public, on website**

1. Aims

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. Parents and students play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

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 (applies from 19 August 2024), 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

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons ready and prepared to learn including wearing the right uniform and bringing the correct equipment.

High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance. Good attendance is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. For the most vulnerable students, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

Students' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with Herefordshire Council and other agencies if a students' attendance is a cause for concern in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contentsThe Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

This policy also complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School contact details for Reporting Absence

For attendance queries and information please see school contacts below:

- Email: ktpsadmin@kingstoneacademy.co.uk

- To leave a pupil absence message telephone 01981 250338 and choose option 1

- Mr J Bull, Assistant Headteacher, is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school

It is paramount that parents/carers keep school updated with all new contact details and changes of address. This includes sharing work telephone numbers with us when moving to a new job. This is to ensure we can contact you in an emergency.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents and making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
- Making sure all schools in the trust record attendance accurately in the register, and share the required information with the DfE and local authorities
- Making sure all schools in the trust work effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keep them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the trust's policies and ethos
- Making sure the schools' 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 trust has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most, through termly Quality and Standards meetings
- Working with school leaders to provide support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole trust and 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, including with teachers from across the trust, 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 trust's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The trust'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
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the trust and providing regular opportunities for staff from different schools to come together, learn from each other and share resources
- Holding the Headteachers to account for the implementation of this policy
- Identifying and monitoring attendance patterns across the trust's schools to identify common issues and barriers

4.2 The Headteacher
The Headteacher is responsible for:
- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees
- 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

4.4 The Designated Senior leader responsible for Attendance

The designated senior leader 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
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the head of school
- Making referrals to the local authority for unauthorised absences that may results in fixed-penalty notices

4.5 Class Teachers and Form Tutors

All class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office within 10 minutes of the start of each session/lesson.

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence
- Support students with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school

4.6 The Attendance Officer

The responsivities of the Attendance Officer are:

- Building strong relationships with families, listening to, and understanding barriers to attendance and working with families to remove them
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data, identify early patterns of absence
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about individual
- students
- Working with the education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence

- Regularly analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and punctuality, putting effective strategies in place as a school team
- Providing evidence, where necessary, to support special considerations regarding attendance and absence
- Advising the Headteacher when a referral is made to Herefordshire Council

4.7 Admin Staff

Admin staff will:

- Take calls and emails from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the head of year/pastoral lead where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

4.8 Parents

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

- All 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)

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am 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
- Request in writing any planned absences at least 6 weeks in advance
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day School requests that parents support their child's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum and provide evidence to support appointments, failure to do so may result in the absence being unauthorised
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the school as soon as any issues arise that could affect regular attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be reported to the school office. If a student leaves the school premises the parents will be contacted and it is their parental responsibility to return their child to school.

When students leave school and no information regarding their new school/placement has been received by school and/or parents/carers cannot be contacted, the school has a duty of care regarding safeguarding and must contact the Local Authority to advise of this situation.

This means the Local Authority has a legal duty to investigate, which will include liaising with social care, police and other agencies to track and locate the student. Parents who give the new school details of the student's new school and location avoid unnecessary investigations and concern.

4.9 Students

Students are expected to:

- Pupils are expected to attend school every day on time

5. Recording Attendance

5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

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:

- 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.

The school day starts at 8.50am and ends at 3.20pm.

The school day begins at 8.50am for the register and all students are expected to be in school by this time. The school gates are open in the morning between 8:35 and 8:50, where children will be welcomed in by a member of SLT. Reception children should use the Reception class entrance, where they will be greeted by the Reception staff.

If your child arrives later than 8:50am, then they should report to the school office to be signed in.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:50 and kept open until 9.00am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.00pm and kept open until 1:10pm.

Attendance times for students on PSPs will be determined by the PSP arrangements agreed by parents/carers and school.

All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary. Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded U. This mark shows them to be on site but is legally recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If a student is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M if proof of an appointment is provided.

Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action. Parents, guardians or carers of students who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a referral may be submitted to Herefordshire council who may initiate legal proceedings.

5.2 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 or emailing the school office attendance email.

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.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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.

5.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We request that parents/carers support this with a copy of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

5.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact police if there is a safeguarding concern
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent

- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving outside agencies.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve; refer to the local authority for a possible penalty notice; or other legal intervention as appropriate.

5.6 Reporting to parents

The schools will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 4.8 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels.

6. Reporting Absence

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 your child is absent, you must contact us as soon as possible on the first morning of absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return. If your child is absent, we will:

- telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance;
- possibly do a home visit
- invite you in to discuss the situation with a member of the attendance team;
- Where a child is on a child in need plan or looked after contact will be made with the relevant social worker on day 1.

Third day absence

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family. At this point we may carry out a home visit to ensure the well-being of the child.

Tenth day absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. It would be helpful if you could ensure that we always have an up-to-date contact number.

Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. Any student who is persistently absent will be monitored and put on an action plan, if required. A member of the attendance team will meet with students, and their families whose attendance cause concern.

Where necessary, home visits are made to discuss ways attendance could be improved and the barriers that may need removing: This could include:

• Agreeing an attendance support plan

• Signposting to outside agencies

In situations of persistent truanting, a parent / carer may be referred to Herefordshire Council.

6.1 Requesting a Leave of Absence

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

The Head of School 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
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as events which are outside the control of parents, for example the funeral of a close relative.

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, where possible, at least 14 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or website. The Head of School 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 5.2 and 5.3 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

7. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The School Handbook contains details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance on our website
- report to you 3 times a year on how your child is performing in school – this is through Parents' Evenings and a written report at the end of the year
- celebrate good attendance with individuals during Parents' Evenings

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Contact your child's tutor/head of house immediately and openly discuss your worries.

Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school? Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

Further support can accessed from the Department for Education's Working Together to Improve Attendance document.

School strategies for supporting attendance

As a school we encourage good attendance through a range of strategies including:

- Listening to parents and students, building positive relationships
- Ensuring that good attendance is high profile in school through sharing data and statistics on our weekly Head's Newsletter
- Letters to parents to stress the importance of good attendance
- Encourage positive engagement with support services
- Celebration assemblies

8. Attendance Monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

When attendance falls below expected levels for the school the following early interventions will take place:

- Attendance is examined daily for daily absences
- Weekly attendance analysis take place
- Warning letters sent to parents before absences have a significant impact
- Attendance meetings with parent / carers and student
- Work with at risk students
- Work in partnership with parents by developing tailored attendance plans

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

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so that data can be accessed regularly and securely

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

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

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

8.3 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 severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)

- Provide regular attendance reports in order to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the board of trustees and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- 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

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Students are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence.

There are two main categories of absences:

- **authorised absence**: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.

- **unauthorised absence**: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
  - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
  - truancy before or during the school day
  - absences which have not been explained.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday. Parents will be notified in writing.

If the authenticity of an illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in writing.

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 trusts strategy for improving attendance.

The schools 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

8.5 Legal measures for tackling Poor Attendance

Our Trust 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.

Referrals to Herefordshire Council

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness
We will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:
1. the child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
2. the child or family has failed to engage with help and support and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures may be used for students of compulsory school age who are registered at a school and the decisions are made by Herefordshire Council in accordance with their code of conduct:
- Parenting contracts
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

The decision on whether to refer to Herefordshire Council ultimately rests with the Headteacher. This may take into account:
- a number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- Irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

Hereford Council will prosecute.

Penalty Notices

The 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.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the local authority 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

In accordance with the definition of parent within the Education Act 1996, more than one person may be liable for the offence. In such circumstances, separate notices will be issued to each person. Penalty Notices are therefore issued per parent, per child. A parent includes any person who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996, irrespective as to whether those persons are biological parents. Penalty notices will usually be issued to the parent or parents with day-to-day responsibility for the pupil's attendance or the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence) - this can include step-parents.

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.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £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 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, are not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.
In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

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 by the local authority 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 referral may be made before the end of the improvement period

9. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance.

10. Links with other policies

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
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 setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
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	Pupil is not in school due to having a 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
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 school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
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
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	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays