



Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1** Thomas Deacon Academy recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for students to gain the most from their school experiences; as such good attendance:
- Promotes student welfare and safeguarding.
 - Ensures every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
 - Ensures that students have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at the Academy and when they leave.
- 1.2** The Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils/students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent attendance for all. This is based on the belief that, only by attending the academy regularly and punctually, young people are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High achievement and attainment are linked directly to high attendance.
- 1.3** The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. It is called “Working together to improve school attendance August 2024” and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of this guidance.
- 1.4** This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and supports our core purpose, *“To ensure that each student acquires the necessary knowledge, skills and character to make a positive contribution to society and ‘thrive’ as a global citizen.”*
- 1.5** The whole academy community – students, parents and carers, staff and Academy Committee (AC) members at Thomas Deacon Academy have a responsibility for ensuring good attendance and have important roles to play. We are committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies to achieve the best outcomes for children via the early help pathways available. The purpose of this policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.
- 1.6** We believe that ours is a successful, welcoming academy in which parents/carers and students play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of our school community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, on time and every day on which the academy is open (Isle of Wight V Platt; see section 5.3), unless the reason for the absence is exceptional.
- 1.7** All staff (teaching and support) at our academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the academy community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

- 1.8** The school liaises closely with our Local Authority and other agencies using an Early Help pathway (Early Help Referral) which assists in the assessment of need, in order for appropriate support to be given. This initial pathway enables further referrals to external agencies to be made and further support acquired to support families to remove any barriers that are preventing regular attendance.
- 1.9** For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at the Academy, on time, every day the Academy is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is the rule of this Academy that students must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances with evidence provided, and it is the Academy, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**
- 2.0** At Thomas Deacon Academy, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our students from the outset. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.
- 2.1** The name of the Senior Attendance Champion (the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our Academy) is Mr M Paine – Deputy Principal.
- 2.2** The AC member with responsibility for monitoring attendance is John Turner.
- 2. Attendance Officer**
- 2.1** Our Attendance Officer will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the academy's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the academy.
- 2.2** The Attendance Officer will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the relevant senior leader and are made regularly available to all staff, students and parents/carers (who will be regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance).
- 2.3** The Attendance Officer, supported by the Attendance Administrators, and in conjunction with Pastoral Teams, will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that appropriate and proportionate support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- 2.4** We use data to monitor, identify and support individual students when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department of Education on a daily basis (Information about Individual Pupils Regulations 2024).
- 2.5** Persistently and severely absent students are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.
- 2.6** The Attendance Officer shares information and works collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

3. Why regular attendance is so important - Learning

- 3.1** Regular attendance is so important as it gives your child the best opportunity to learn. Any absences will affect the pattern of your child's schooling and consistent absences may seriously affect learning and achievement. Any child's absence disrupts teaching routines, not only for your child but for others in the same class.
- 3.2** Ensuring regular attendance at the academy is the **legal responsibility** of the parent/carer and permitting absence from the academy without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

4. Why regular attendance is so important - Safeguarding

- 4.1** A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend the academy regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and, within the context of this academy, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for learners encompasses:
- attendance;
 - mental health & wellbeing;
 - behaviour management;
 - health and safety;
 - access to the curriculum;
 - anti-bullying.

Failing to attend the academy on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, carers, students, academy staff and external agencies.

- 4.2** To help us all to focus on this we will:
- regularly communicate the importance of good attendance to staff, students and parents/carers;
 - give you details on students' attendance via the MCAS App;
 - report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress;
 - contact parents/carers directly, by letter, if your child's attendance drops below 96%;
 - celebrate and reward good attendance.

5. Understanding barriers to attendance

- 5.1** 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 academy, the parents/carers and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then the academy 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.

- 5.2 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 individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.
- 5.3 Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these students; however, we will work with families and students 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.
- 5.4 Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

5. The Law relating to attendance

- 5.1 New legislation was passed - The School Attendance Regulations, 2024 introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.
- 5.2 Parents may be recognised differently under education law, then under family law. Section 576 of Education Act 1996 states that a "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred "biological parent") but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.
- 5.3 A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part-time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.
- 5.4 It is the legal responsibility of **every** parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an **additional legal duty** to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
- 5.5 The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case (2017) considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are determined by the school and are the days and hours that they are open for pupils to attend. Under this judgment all children registered at a school should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this and for which clear evidence has been provided.

6. The Law relating to safeguarding

- 6.1** Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.
- 6.2** In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

7. Absence Procedures

7.1 Parents/Carers

If your child is absent, you must:

- **contact the Academy before 9:15am, when our registers close, on each day of absence either by phone leaving a detailed answerphone message or by using the My Child at School (MCAS) App.**
- provide evidence on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already contacted us;
- Ensure that your child returns to the Academy as soon as possible. Medical evidence will be requested for absences over 3 days or where your child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons. When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents/carers and school staff can consider advice on the NHS website.

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers, so we always need to have at least two contact numbers. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date number; if we do not then something important may be missed. Contact details can be easily updated on the MCAS App or via a 'Change of Details' form (from the SSO), throughout the year.

7.2 The Academy

If your child is absent, we will, under our Safeguarding Policy:

- contact you via MCAS App at the start of every day of absence if we have not heard from you. However, it is parents'/carers' responsibility to contact the Academy in the first instance;
- By day 3, telephone all contacts held on our school system;
- invite you to a meeting in order to discuss the situation with us;
- visit you at home in order to conduct a safe and well check; this may also be conducted by the Police;
- we may refer the matter to the Peterborough City Council Attendance Service if the attendance falls below **90%**. Peterborough City Council may consider issuing a Penalty Notice for Non School Attendance;
- A referral will be made to the Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents/carers by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered "missing from education".

If absence continues, we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 96% / causing concern and/or where punctuality is a concern;
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with your child's Head of Year or a member of their team.
- Create a personalised action/support plan, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of the child;
- Offer or signpost parents/carers to support from other agencies or services, if appropriate;
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above sanctions.

7.3 Support and Challenge

Parents are expected to work with the academy and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Peterborough City Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct) or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

8. Managing Lateness – Guidance for Parents/Carers

- 8.1** Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their life and out into the wider world.
- 8.2** Students who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their teachers.
- 8.3** The senior academy doors open at 8.30am and registers open at 8.45am and we expect all students to be in morning registration, with their tutor, at that time. Students will receive a late mark, and a negative behaviour point, if they have not arrived by this time.
- 8.4** At the junior academy, registers open at 9.00am and pupils should arrive at 8.50am to ensure that they are on time; pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in class by this time.
- 8.5** At 9.15am all registers at both the senior and junior academy will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if a student arrives after that time, they will receive a 'U' mark (unauthorised late) that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark, and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- 8.6** If a student has a persistent late record, parents/carers will be asked to meet with the academy to resolve the problem, but parents can approach the academy at any time if they are having problems getting a student to the Academy on time. We expect parents and staff

to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our students and, as an academy, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

9. Understanding Types of Absence

9.1 Any absence affects the routine of a child's education and regular attendance will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any student's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same lesson. Ensuring a child's regular attendance and punctuality at the Academy is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from the Academy, without good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

9.2 Every half-day absence from the academy has to be classified by the academy (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, with supporting evidence.

9.3 **Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. With all these absences you may be asked to provide evidence relating to the absence, before it can be authorised; with any absences over 3 days, medical evidence will need to be provided before it will be authorised.

9.4 **Unauthorised** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- students having a late night;
- non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- saying "sick", "poorly", "ill" or "unwell" on any contact made to the Academy for the absence and not properly explaining the reason for absence;
- student refusal to attend;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration (after 9:15am) these students are marked using a U code;
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children;
- their own or families birthdays;
- day trips;
- holidays taken during term time, not authorised as an **exceptional/unavoidable circumstance** by the principal, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

These types of absences can lead to the Peterborough City Council Attendance Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

9.5 Whilst any child may be absent from the academy because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the Academy, the parents/carers and the child. If your 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 increases the problem.

10. Leave of Absence – Guidance for Parents/Carers

- 10.1** Taking leave of absence without exceptional circumstances, in term time, will affect your child's educational outcomes. As much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not allowing absence in academy time. Any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education as well as potential payment of a fine from the Local Authority.
- 10.2** Leave of absence request forms are available from the student's respective SSO at the main academy and from Reception at the Junior Academy.
- 10.3** **There is no entitlement in law for students to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absences for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in a protest activity in school hours.** In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".
- 10.4** The School Attendance Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirement for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances", and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.
- 10.5** It is a rule of Thomas Deacon Academy that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless the reason and evidence considered are to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the student's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or their designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance using the academy's Leave of Absence Form.
- 10.6** The academy will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a student after their application for leave was declined or where no application was made to the academy, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Peterborough City Council's Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.
- 10.7** All applications for leave of absence must be made **4 weeks in advance**. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave, the academy will consider the circumstances of each application individually and all evidence provided.
- 10.8** The Academy will consider the request and respond in writing with a decision.
- 10.9** It is important that parents/carers understand that we will **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances**.
- 10.10** Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the academy and/or different from that agreed by the academy, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions, such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carers per child, or the pupil/student removed from the academy roll.

- 10.11** The headteacher/academy may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.
- 10.12** If a leave of absence is authorised, the academy will not provide work for students to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to encourage their child, if Junior age, to read and write a daily diary, and if Senior age, students to access educational apps used for the relevant subject, whilst they are away.

11. Procedures relating to absences during Academy Term Time

- 11.1** When there is a period of unauthorised leave of absence, no exceptional circumstances have been given and the leave of absence has not been authorised by the academy, then the period of absence requested is recorded as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority.
- 11.2** Where it is believed that a student has left the area and enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil/student, the academy will inform the Local Authority, and the student could be taken off roll after 20 days.

12. Persistent Absence (PA)

- 12.1** A student is defined by the Government as a “**persistent absentee**” (**PA**) when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the academic year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need the full support and co-operation of parent/carers to resolve this. All students who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be persistent absentee.
- 12.2** A student who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as “**severely absent**”. Students within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.
- 12.3** At Thomas Deacon Academy we monitor all absences rigorously. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.
- 12.4** PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we may also combine this with mentoring where absence affects progress and attainment.
- 12.5** All PA, or potential PA cases, are referred to our link Peterborough City Council Attendance Officer.
- 12.6** Parents/Carers of PA pupil/students will need to provide additional medical evidence in the form of:
- Medical prescriptions / Medication;
 - A letter from a Medical/Health Professional.

- 12.7 For pupils/students who have a long-term medical condition, parents/carers will need to keep the Academy updated with regular medical guidance.

13. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the Local Authority

13.1 A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met:

- 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or educational setting.
- Students identified in a public place whilst excluded from the Academy (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices, please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct** which is available on the Peterborough City Council website.

14. Payment of Penalty Notices

- 14.1 Details of arrangements for the payment of penalties will be detailed on the Penalty Notice. Penalties should be paid in full, in one instalment, to the Local Authority and are retained to cover costs of issuing, enforcing or prosecuting recipients who do not pay.
- 14.2 A penalty notice will be issued to each parent (for each child) and is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued with a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent per child with no reduction for early payment. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2,500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.
- 14.3 If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the Local Authority, in accordance with the Department of Education, must either prosecute for the offence or withdraw the notice.
- 14.4 Prosecution is for the offence to which it relates rather than for non-payment of the Penalty Notice.
- 14.5 The decision to prosecute ultimately lies with Peterborough City Council Legal Services, who will consider whether the prosecution is in the Public Interest.

15. Deletions from Roll

- 15.1 Under Section 8 (1) (h), (i), (iii) of the Education Regulations 2006, should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on 20th day of absence, the academy is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.

15.2 This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8(h) – that he/she/they will have continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and:

- at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);
- the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil/s is/are unable to attend school by reason on sickness or exceptional cause.

15.3 For any student leaving Thomas Deacon Academy, other than at the end of Year 6 or the end of Year 11, parents/carers are required to inform the school by completing a Leaving City Form. On the form parents should provide the following information: pupil/student's name, class/tutor group, 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 may appropriately safeguard all our pupils/students even those who leave us.

16. DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. From 19th August 2024

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

All pupils

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

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

Persistently absent pupils

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

Severely absent pupils

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

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

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

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

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

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are.</p> <p>Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort.</p> <p>Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners, understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it.</p> <p>Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.

Looked after and previously looked after children

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked-after children that support good attendance.</p> <p>Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.</p>	<p>Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.</p>	<p>Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care.</p> <p>(LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school- whenever they live or are educated. • Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. • Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance. • Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.

Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
<p>Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.</p> <p>(If parents feel the school and or local authority have not delivered what they are expected to they should discuss the case with the school and/or local authority's attendance support team.)</p>	<p>The school's Senior Attendance Champion will ensure all school based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures.</p> <p>The governing board or academy trust will hold the headteacher or executive leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance.</p> <p>Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a school has not met expectations or statutory duties the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making.</p> <p>Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.</p> <p>Ofsted may consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children and young people with SEND as part of the SEND Area Inspection, and the local authority's approach to improving attendance for children with a social worker through inspecting local authority children's services.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a local authority has not met expectations or statutory duties the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>