



Attendance Policy

Approved by the Board of Directors: November 2024

School Mission Statement

“To create and sustain, with God’s help, a learning, caring and serving community where all people are valued for who they are and who they may become in the light of Jesus Christ.”

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Principles

As a school, we realise that for a pupil to reach their full educational potential, a high level of school attendance is essential. An ethos of high levels of attendance and punctuality is recognised and valued across our whole school community. We aim to work with parents/carers to ensure that all pupils registered at school attend every day and on time, unless the absence is unavoidable. We expect that all pupils will achieve 100% attendance but recognise that there may be exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence, or absences relating to persistent health issues. Our policy applies to all pupils of statutory school age, across the Key Stages to promote good attendance habits school-wide.

The following guidance has been taken into consideration when developing this policy: [Working Together to Improve School Attendance. August 2024.](#)

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support pupils and their parents/carers to have the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer.
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.

School education lays the vital foundations of a pupil’s life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Absence from school can place pupils at risk and in some cases result in their being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. As a school we will encourage parents/carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

The school has a safeguarding duty of care to all its pupils. We take the role of ensuring a pupil’s good attendance as part of our safeguarding duties.

Expectations

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school prepared for the school day, punctually and in time for registration. Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Inform school in advance of any medical appointments during school time. Parents may on occasion be asked to provide supporting information from the hospital, doctor or dentist, such as appointment

details card/letter/text message in relation to the time requested. Where possible, medical appointments should be arranged outside of school hours.

- Ensure that they contact the school before 8.55am if their child is unable to attend school, citing the reason.
- Inform the school as soon as possible about a pupil's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time, which should only be taken if absolutely necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an exceptional circumstance. Any leave taken during term time, that has been unauthorised, could be subject to a penalty notice/fine.
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details, and ensure school has more than one name, address and telephone number as an emergency contact.
- Engage with early interventions designed to support the family and their child's attendance at school.
- Discuss attendance where necessary face to face or on the telephone – conversations are preferable to messages or emails.
- Monitor their child's attendance at school using the SIMS Parent app.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that pupils of statutory school age (until the last Friday in June when the pupil is in Year 11) attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence.

We expect that school will:

- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Contact parents/carers when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, information from a GP or other relevant body may be requested to assist school in offering appropriate support.
- Promote and celebrate good attendance and punctuality, for example through assemblies, and parent/carer communications.
- Meet regularly with the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Local Authority Attendance Service.
- Provide intensive and bespoke support to pupils at risk of persistent absence. This will include reintegration plans for excluded students and both short and long-term absentees as appropriate.
- Work alongside other services and teams to support pupils' attendance, e.g. other schools in a multi academy trust, the Local Authority, Early Help, Social Care, Youth Offending Service, Senior Transition Advisers, Virtual School and the local community (including volunteers).
- Share attendance data with parents/carers and make it clear what good attendance and success looks like for their child.
- Communicate clearly and consistently with parents/carers and pupils regarding attendance.

- Follow the Local Authority Medical Needs Policy for pupils who are failing to access education in school due to medical and behavioural needs. This goes hand in hand with Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.
- Consider an Individual Healthcare Plan for pupils with medical needs.
- Work alongside the school's Education Inclusion Officer (EIO) to identify and support pupils with medical needs preventing them from attending school.
- Work with pregnant pupils to ensure reasonable and sufficient leave is taken, which will be treated as leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.

All members of the school staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness; with the Headteacher having overall responsibility for the monitoring of attendance and lateness of every pupil. Where there are concerns, parents will always be informed by letter and/or telephone conversation and given an opportunity to come into school to meet with designated staff.

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day.
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher any problems that may affect their school attendance.

We expect that governors will:

- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis.
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

We expect that the Local Authority will:

- Provide support, information and guidance to school by having regular meetings to discuss attendance.
- Act as a partner with school to support in some cases of persistent absence.
- Work with schools in the enforcement of penalty notices, fines and prosecutions in cases that require legal involvement.
- Identify suitable provision and reasonable adjustments for pupils unable to access education due to prolonged ill health.

School Attendance Strategy

The school's Attendance Team includes Heads of Year, the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo), the Inclusion Manager, the Key Stage Transitions Manager, the Attendance Assistant, the Office Manager, a Senior Attendance Champion and the Headteacher.

The Attendance Champion for our school is Anna Grady. She is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and can be contacted on agrady@stbedes.cambs.sch.uk.

Whilst Anna Grady is our Senior Attendance Champion, for day-to-day aspects of attendance, please contact our Attendance Assistant, on absence@stbedes.cambs.sch.uk or 01223 568816.

We are responsible for all pupils' attendance at school, and we partner with other agencies to help us do this. For pupils who might need extra support to maintain their attendance, e.g. Young Carers, we signpost

families to appropriate places to reduce the impact that their needs and personal circumstances have on their attendance at school. Safeguarding and attendance are closely linked, and we work together with Social Care to identify where pupils need extra support. We will work with families in many different ways to overcome barriers to attendance. All staff have direct access to our trained Designated Safeguarding Lead, and this is important for this work.

School is responsible for monitoring whole school attendance data and using this to inform how we support pupils. We share this data within the school staff to ensure continuity of support and use the pastoral system such as Heads of Year and Tutors to engage pupils in attendance intervention. We are required to report our attendance to the Department for Education (DfE) so that we can compare our performance with that of other schools, both locally and nationally. Attendance data is analysed regularly, and pupils whose attendance is falling or deemed to be a concern will be noted. This will be communicated with parents and carers. Support will then be put in place. Pupils whose attendance falls to 90% or under are deemed to be 'persistently absent' and can be referred to the Local Authority for enforcement action. Pupils whose attendance is 50% or under are 'severely persistently absent' and parents/carers will be expected to engage in substantial support.

We have a whole-school ethos of promoting and celebrating attendance. This means that we train every staff member in attendance procedures so that everyone understands the processes for attendance and the pastoral structures in school. We train, remind and support all staff to follow this policy, and constantly refer to it. Attendance is reported to parents/carers in snapshots and school reports. Parents/carers can also see their child's attendance on the online platform SIMS Parent app.

Our whole-school strategy for attendance involves deciding how to allocate resources (both financial and staffing) to manage attendance. Our support and early interventions for attendance are regularly monitored to ensure they are having an impact and are worth the resources allocated to them.

Supporting Attendance

As a school, we aim to work collaboratively with parents/carers to improve school attendance. This means that we will **listen, empathise and support with attendance. However, if this is unsuccessful, legal sanctions will be considered where appropriate.**



When required, support strategies with a monitoring period will be put in place to help improve the attendance or lateness of a pupil. Should a pupil's attendance or lateness continue to be a concern despite the support strategies in place, with no improvement to the expected level set by school, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team for statutory aged pupils. This could result in a Penalty Notice/fine, or prosecution being issued by Cambridgeshire County Council, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

Working together, the Attendance Assistant, Office Manager Heads of Year, SENDCo and/or Inclusion Manager:

- Scrutinise the registers daily, monitoring authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons provided for pupil absence and lateness.

- Monitor the SIMS management information system to ensure accuracy of record keeping by all staff completing registers.
- Alert Heads of Year when attendance concerns occur (Attendance Assistant). Raise concerns with parents/carers of identified patterns of lateness with an initial 'Late Letter'.
- Contact parents by telephone, email, or letter to establish a reason for a pupil's absence if the reason is unknown.
- Raise concerns with parents/carers once attendance has fallen below an acceptable level.
- Offer support or signpost to other areas of support within the community.
- Follow our intervention process:
 - Step one: Telephone call advising parent/carers of our concerns regarding the level of their child's attendance/lateness and offering support.
 - Step two: Send a letter to offer support and further explain the effect the absence/lateness is having on the pupil.
 - Step three: Send an invitation to attend a meeting to enter into an Attendance Contract. This is a supportive meeting, entered into voluntarily to discuss the needs of a pupil and family and identify ways that barriers to attendance can be removed.
 - Step four: Should the Attendance Contract fail to improve attendance, or should there be no engagement with interventions and support despite every attempt by the school to support the family, a request for the issue of a penalty notice/fine or prosecution could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team for pupils of statutory school age.
 - At Step 3 or 4, school might consider using a Notice To Improve letter, a strategy used in partnership with the Local Authority to set targets for improved attendance. This is a final attempt to improve attendance when parents/carers are failing to engage with support being offered by school, before referring parents for legal sanctions.
 - Following use of one of the two pathways above, if attendance does not improve, school will refer to the Local Authority for legal sanctions.
- Liaise with other external organisations in relation to a pupil's attendance/lateness.
- Inform a pupil's Youth Offending Team worker/the SAFE Team if appropriate, that the pupil's attendance is a concern.
- Monitor pupil attendance within specific and identified groups.
- Monitor and respond to pupil absences for those with additional medical needs.
- Monitor pupils and follow procedures for pupils who are 'Pupils Missing in Education'.
- Follow reporting procedures for parents who have requested to home educate their child.
- Follow statutory procedures when deleting a pupil from roll.
- Monitor absences for illness and requests for leave to attend medical appointments.
- Report pupils to the Local Authority when they have 10 consecutive 'O' coded (unauthorised absence) sessions in school.
- Report pupils with unauthorised term-term leave absences (10 consecutive sessions of 'G' codes) to the Local Authority for issuing of a legal sanction to parents/carers.
- Raise pupils with 15 consecutive days of 'I' (illness) codes during the fortnightly inclusion meeting with the school's Education Inclusion officer (EIO).

Registration

- The school gates are opened at 8.00am.
- After 9.00am, entry to the school is via reception unless the late pupil has already registered with a member of staff outside at the front of school.
- Registers are open at 9.00 am and close at 9.30 am. Pupils who arrive at school after the register has been taken, but before it is closed, will be recorded as 'L' - late on the register.
- Pupils who arrive at school after registers close at 9.30am, without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as 'U' - unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.
- Pupils must sign in and out if they arrive or leave school outside of the normal times using the computer sign in system at reception.
- Form tutors will praise students for arriving on time, take prompt action where students are late or absent without explanation, record lateness and refer concerns to the Head of Year.

It is a legal requirement that a register of attendance is taken during the morning and afternoon at school. Any unexplained absence must be coded as unauthorised until a reason is given by parents/carers. This must be no later than 5 days after the session. Only the Headteacher may authorise or unauthorise an absence. The register can only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, the register will show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment. Registers are kept for six years as a record.

Every lesson is registered through the school internal system. Teachers are expected to ensure that the register is taken as promptly as possible. The reason for this is to track punctuality and in school truancy. Teachers will alert the Head of Year if there are concerns over student absence.

Lateness

When pupils arrive late at school, they disrupt routines, affect other pupils' learning, miss the teacher's instructions to the lesson and may also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. They may also miss important intervention programmes and the opportunity to practice key learning skills. Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, Parents/carers will receive contact from the school advising them of the concern and offering support to resolve the issue. Should the lateness continue, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

If there is no improvement, despite the school's attempts to address unauthorised absences, a referral could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team for pupils who are of statutory school age.

Reporting a pupil absence

Parents/carers must contact school on the first and every subsequent day of absence by 9.00am.

For any pupil not present at the close of registration, if the reason is still unknown, a member of staff will attempt to make contact with the parent/carers once the registers have closed at 9.30am.

The member of staff will first send a text message. If there is no reply, they will ring every contact, starting with the priority contact, until a reason for absence is known. Messages will be left on voicemail requesting parents/carers contact school regarding their pupil's absence. Outcomes of any phone conversations will be logged on the pupil's electronic school record. Staff will complete the registers in accordance with the correct use of registration codes (see appendix 1).

Any unexplained absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence if there is no response from a parent/carer to an enquiry regarding their pupil's absence from school.

At times we may decide it is necessary to conduct a door knock to establish the safety and wellbeing of a pupil who is absent without explanation from a parent/carer.

For absences relating to a medical appointment, supporting information may be requested to authorise this absence. This can be a text message which clearly identifies who the appointment is for, or an appointment card. A period of absence will only be authorised in relation to the length of the appointment.

Illness

Pupils who are unable to attend school due to diarrhoea or sickness can return 48 hours after the last episode.

Pupils with mild coughs, colds, sore throats, sneezes and runny noses who are otherwise well can continue to attend school. However, if they develop a high temperature they should stay at home until their temperature has reduced and they are well enough to return to school. A guide to whether your child is able to attend school with minor illnesses is here: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk). The information is backed up by the Department for Education (DfE). We expect pupils to attempt to come to school unless they are too unwell to complete basic tasks. We will contact you if they need to return home.

Medical Needs and SEND

When pupils are prevented from accessing school due to physical or mental ill health, school will try to identify the barriers these pupils face and use our tiered approach to supporting medical needs. This starts with the universal offer of support for all pupils and leads to higher tiers of need where increasingly specialist support is required. We will consider reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements. We will liaise with appropriate services to ascertain support in the rare instances that a pupil is unable to access any education inside the school setting. We will work with our school's allocated Education Inclusion Officer where necessary to identify available options for education. Where a pupil's health needs mean they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, we may seek medical information to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision. This may take a variety of forms, which we will discuss with parents/carers on an individual basis.

Where pupils have an EHCP, we will liaise closely with the pupil's SEN Caseworker to work towards the best attendance outcomes for the pupil.

We are able to make adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010

where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments must be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with, the pupil and their parents/carers.

General Non-Attendance

This is different to being absent due to illness or other authorised circumstances, or for unauthorised term-time leave. General non-attendance is when a pupil is absent from school, without it being exceptional circumstances and without it being authorised by school. If your child has irregular school attendance, the school will work with you to identify the barriers to attendance and will try to find ways to remove those barriers. This support has already been discussed in this policy. If your child continues to be absent without authorisation from the school, then you may be referred to the Local Authority for legal sanctions to be considered. The threshold for this would be 10 sessions (an AM or PM mark in the register is one session) over a period of 10 or more school weeks. Before school refer to the Local Authority for non-attendance, we will work with you and offer support. We may offer you an Attendance Contract Meeting which is a supportive pathway where we discuss the barriers to attendance and try to break them down. An alternative action might be considered if you do not engage in support from school - we may set targets for your child's attendance jointly with the Local Authority, with the aim that it improves. This called a Notice to Improve and is a last attempt at improving attendance before legal sanctions are sought.

Definitions of Leave

We expect attendance at school to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Authorised leave

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as:

- Illness or a medical appointment. There is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending on where the appointment falls within the school day and the health of the pupil.
- Religious Observance - only day(s) exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to.
- The leave of absence has been authorised due to a short and exceptional, unavoidable circumstance.

Unauthorised leave

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the school, even with the support of the parent/carer, such as:

- Shopping, hair appointments, visiting family, taking part in a protest or birthdays.
- There has been no reason provided by the parent/carer to support an absence.
- Failure to follow school procedures or inform the school when taking a pupil out of school during term time.
- A leave of absence that has not been authorised due to not being considered an exceptional circumstance.

Coding is always at the Headteacher's discretion.

Study Leave

Study leave is for GCSE examinations only and must be agreed between school and the parents/carers who the pupil normally lives with in advance. This does not include internal exams or mocks. Study leave will not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete and will be used sparingly. Provision will still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Term-Time Leave

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their pupil out of school for a term-time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion for headteachers agreeing to term-time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken. Parents must complete a Term-Time Leave Request Form (Appendix 2) and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their pupil out of school during the school day.

If the school suspect term-time leave has been taken but the parents/carers have not completed a Term-Time Leave Request Form, we will write to the parents/carers giving them an opportunity to clarify the reason for absence and provide supporting evidence. Failure to respond to or provide supporting evidence will result in a referral to the Local Authority for unauthorised leave from school.

Exceptional circumstances (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis. Examples of requests for leave of absence that **do not** meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance and **will not** be authorised and could be subject to a Penalty Notice fine/prosecution for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad.
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term.
- Trip of a lifetime.
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates.
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if it does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance.
- Leave taken due to potential travel disruption.
- Leave taken to try and relieve travel distress for family members with additional needs.

Absence Due to Sporting Activities

Attendance at sporting events as a spectator or supporter will not be authorised. Training camps should be organised for during the school holidays. Absence to attend competitions will be assessed on an individual basis and information from the sport's national governing body will be requested to assist with the school's decision-making process.

It all adds up – absence and learning hours lost

Attendance of student	Actual attendance over a school year	Equivalent whole days absent	Equivalent learning hours lost	
100%	190	0	0	Excellent
99%	188	2	10	Good
98%	186	4	20	
97%	184	6	30	
96%	182.5	7.5	37.5	
95%	180.5	9.5	47.5	
94%	177	13	65	Cause for concern
92%	175	15	75	
90%	171	19	95	Risk of penalty notice and/or legal proceedings
89%	169	21	105	

Penalty Notices

If a pupil takes unauthorised term-time leave for 10 consecutive sessions or more (generally 5 days) they will be subject to a Penalty Notice. The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per pupil, per parent/carer, increasing to £160 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their pupil and this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

For second offences of unauthorised term-time leave (10 consecutive sessions or more) within a three-year rolling period, the fine is a flat £160 per parent, per pupil. For the third offence in a three-year rolling period, the referral will be automatically considered for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Children Missing in Education

If a pupil fails to attend school for 10 consecutive days, without explanation, and the school does not know where the pupil is, the school will refer the pupil to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education. After a further 10 days of absence with no explanation, your child is at risk of losing their school place with us. During this 20-day period, school will continue to try and contact you, and will liaise with any other services that your child is open to. The Local Authority will conduct investigations into the location and educational provision of the child.

Appendices

Register Coding

Attending the school	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their pupil out of school for a term-time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion for headteachers agreeing to term-time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken. Parents must complete this Term-Time Leave Request Form and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their pupil out of school during the school day.

Exceptional circumstances (definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short) will be considered on an individual basis. Examples of requests for leave of absence that do not meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance and will not be authorised and could be subject to a Penalty Notice fine/prosecution for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad.
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term.
- Trip of a lifetime.
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates.
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if it does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance.
- Leave taken due to potential travel disruption.
- Leave taken to try and relieve travel distress for family members with additional.

If a pupil takes unauthorised term-time leave for 10 consecutive sessions or more (generally 5 days) they will be subject to a Penalty Notice. The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per pupil, per parent/carer, increasing to £160 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their pupil and this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

For second offences of unauthorised term-time leave (10 consecutive sessions or more) within a three-year rolling period, the fine is a flat £160 per parent, per pupil. For the third offence in a three-year rolling period, the referral will be automatically considered for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Full name of student		Tutor group	
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Address					
First date of requested absence		Last date of requested absence		Total days absence requested	
Reason for requested absence					
Full name of parent/carer completing form				Relationship to the child	
Email				Telephone	
Parent/carer signature				Date	

OFFICE USE ONLY

Office: Date form received	
Head: Days authorised and code to use	
Head: Nature of exceptional circumstance if any days authorised	
Head: Days unauthorised (G)	
Office: Date all parents emailed	

Examples of letters and other forms

Letter - early intervention

Dear «salutation»,

Re: child's name: «full name»; DOB: «DOB»; school: St Bede's Inter-Church School

We have noticed that your child «forename» attendance has deteriorated, I have enclosed a copy of «forename»'s attendance record so that you can view a detailed breakdown of your child's absence from school.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning, and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement.

We will continue to monitor «forename»'s attendance and I look forward to seeing an improvement. If the absence is due to a medical reason please ensure that we have been informed so appropriate support can be put in place.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on «forename» attending school regularly or if you are concerned about your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me. However, it does no harm in speaking with the teacher or attendance team, because together we can make a difference.

We know that a lot of families already have a supportive network of relatives, friends and community groups. However additional support is also available for families via an Early Help Assessment, where help can be provided from trained professionals who can provide support, signposting and access your community offer. If you would like to discuss this process in more detail, please contact me using the details below.

Further support is also available in the community, more information can be found on H.A.Y. website. Please scan the QR code below.



Yours sincerely,

«Head of Year name»

«Head of Year Job Title»

Enc. Record of attendance
School attendance leaflet

Letter – invite to attendance contract meeting

Dear «salutation»,

Re: child's name: «full name»; DOB: «DOB»; school: St Bede's Inter-Church School

Thank you for working with us to help improve «forename»'s attendance. Their current attendance is «attendance»%. However, this is still a concern and can potentially affect their life chances. We would like to work with you to offer support to help improve «forename»'s attendance. The next step in offering this support is an Attendance Contract.

An Attendance Contract:

- is a voluntary contract that you can end at any time.
- Can last as long as is helpful
- Can include regular catch-ups to offer support
- Can help to reduce barriers to attendance
- Can involve any other services open to you, who can be involved if you would like.

Our attendance policy includes more details about an Attendance Contract.

[If open to other professionals:] We recognise that «forename» is being supported by other professionals. It's important that we all work together to make it as easy as possible for «forename» to access education. We believe that an Attendance Contract can help to achieve this.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me to discuss further. We would be grateful if you could attend a meeting with us:

Date: [date]

Time: [time]

Should this be inconvenient, please let us know and we can re-arrange. This meeting can take place in person, or online if you would prefer.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss any concerns you may have so we can continue to support your child in making good progress and I hope that you will work with us to improve «forename»'s attendance. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely,

«Head of Year name»

«Head of Year Job Title»

Enc. Record of attendance
School attendance leaflet

Attendance contract form

Attendance Contract between local authority, school, parent(s) and child

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular school attendance. An attendance contract is not legally binding and can be ceased by either the school or the parent at any time. It allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution.

Meeting details	
Date of meeting	

Time of meeting	
Venue	

Pupil details	
Full name	
DOB	
Ethnicity	
School	St Bede's Inter-Church School
Year group	
Address	
Postcode	

School representatives			
Name		Job role	
Name		Job role	

Parent(s)			
Parent's name			
DOB			
Ethnicity			
Gender			
Address			
Postcode			
Language		Is an interpreter required?	
Parent's name			
DOB			
Ethnicity			

Gender			
Address			
Postcode			
Language		Is an interpreter required?	

Any other people present			
Name		Job role	
Name		Job role	
Name		Job role	

Apologies			
Name		Job role	
Name		Job role	
Name		Job role	

Details of any siblings							
Name		DOB		School		Attendance	
Name		DOB		School		Attendance	
Name		DOB		School		Attendance	

Purpose of agreement: To work together to improve child's attendance and to explore any barriers impeding attendance and provide support.

Summary of school interventions to date

Summary of outside agency support to date		
	Current involvements (name of professional and start date) è	Previous involvement (date and duration) è
Early help assessment (EHA) – offer again if previously declined è		
Social care (CIN/CP) è		
CAMH / YOUUnited è		
Medical needs è		
Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) è		
Attendance service è		
Other è		

Early help assessment (EHA)	
Did you offer an EHA today?	
Was support accepted or declined?	

Summary of areas of concern

Attendance			
% attendance last year		% unauthorised absence last year	
% attendance this year to date		% unauthorised absence this year to date	

Issues raised			
	Yes / No	Details	
Alleged bullying			
Behaviour / attitude			
Home related difficulties			
Transport			
Peer / staff relationships			
Academic / SEND			
Community / other			
Medical needs		What is the illness, symptoms, presenting behaviours, barriers? Is it inside school, outside school or both?	
		Have you followed the tiered approach for Medical Needs? If yes, what have you done? If no, why not?	

Pupil voice	
<p>How does the Young Person feel about school?</p> <p>What is going well?</p> <p>What do they not like about school?</p> <p>What are their perceived barriers?</p> <p>How do they find getting to school?</p>	

<p>What do they think would improve their school experience?</p> <p>Which staff members are they receptive to, or have a good relationship with?</p>	
--	--

School will determine with the family and open professionals the duration of the attendance contract (between 3 – 6 months or longer if beneficial).

I/We the parent[s] agree to address the following target areas until the next review period for improvement in attendance and/or punctuality and to co-operate fully with these aims

Agreed actions – please write in detail, as this forms part of your evidence of interventions and support for the pupil.

<p>What does the young person/child need to support them?</p> <p>e.g. referrals to other agencies; amendments to timetable/school day/lunchtime arrangements/uniform etc.</p>	<p>Aims/objectives of identified action(s)</p>	<p>Success criteria How will we know that the contract is making a difference?</p>	<p>Timeframe / start date</p>	<p>People Involved</p>	<p>Review Date</p>	<p>Review of Action/Updates</p> <p>Note: actions do not necessarily need to be COMPLETED. They can be continued or extended as this process evolves. Any new barriers to the action should be identified and steps taken to address these barriers.</p>
<p>Here is a possible example:</p> <p>XYZ needs an alternative route into school. Have a named staff member to be there to meet them at the main gate to the playground and walk with them to registration.</p>	<p>To make XYZ feel more comfortable coming into school. To enable a fresh, positive start to each school day. To make the time before school more manageable for parent.</p>	<p>XYZ will be comfortable coming into school and will be on time. Child will have a positive and calm start to the school day.</p>	<p>Monday. For the 4 weeks until next review.</p>	<p>Named staff member and child. Parent to reinforce.</p>	<p>(4 weeks after)</p>	<p>This was working well for XYZ, for the first two weeks. However, XYZ was pushed over by another pupil on the way into the playground, giving XYZ a negative experience of this strategy. We have now put in place for XYZ to be met at the main Reception door instead to decrease anxiety and allow XYZ to come straight from home to meet their trusted adult at the door. They walk to Registration together.</p>

If I am concerned about my aspect of the delivery of the plan, I will contact school.

Key contact's name	
Contact email or telephone number	
Method of communication preferred by parent(s) e.g. post / email / phone	

Parent(s) will be given a copy of these notes following the meeting. A copy of these notes will be sent to other agencies involved with this child as necessary.

For further support and information, please scan QR code.



Scan me

Additional support can be found from: Sendiass, Pinpoint, HAY.

Planning for the review

Number of school weeks from the date of this meeting after which we will review attendance	
Date of review	
Where will this review take place? e.g. at a TAF meeting, Child In Need meeting, online, in person at school, etc.	

Reasons an Attendance Contract may Cease:

- If an attendance contract is not proving successful or beneficial, it will be reviewed and may potentially cease.
- If a parent does not consistently engage with the Attendance Contract process, there is a risk that the Attendance Contract may cease. A warning will be provided before this occurs.
- Parent may request for the Attendance Contract to cease at any time.

Please note that prior to the Attendance Contract ceasing, a warning letter will be sent to the parent(s) confirming the end date and the reason for the Attendance Contract ceasing.

Whilst the aim of this contract is to provide support, if there is a lack of engagement, disguised compliance (parents are agreeing to the contract actions but failing to actually take action to improve the situation) or unauthorised absences continue, then the school may refer to the Local Authority for enforcement action to be considered.

The Local Authority could issue a Penalty Notice Fine or initiate legal proceedings through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under Section 444 Education Act 1996. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

Signatures					
Parent name		Parent signature		Date	
Parent name		Parent signature		Date	
Pupil name		Pupil signature		Date	
School representative name		School representative signature		Date	
Name		Signature		Date	
Name		Signature		Date	
Name		Signature		Date	

Letter - Failed to attend attendance contract meeting

Dear «salutation»,

Re: child's name: «full name»; DOB: «DOB»; school: St Bede's Inter-Church School

It was unfortunate that you were unable to attend the Attendance Contract Meeting which was due to be held at [location] on [time] at [date].

We acknowledge that the situation may be difficult for you at this time [add the following if open to other agencies] and recognise you may already have lots of meetings to attend. We would welcome another chance to meet with you to continue offering our support to you and [forename].

[forename]'s attendance is currently «attendance»%.

[If child is NOT Section 19 (medical needs):]

It is important that we work together and that [forename]'s attendance improves. The attendance contract is a more informal route aimed at improving attendance. If you choose not to engage with this, and [forename]'s attendance doesn't improve, we will need to liaise with the Local Authority to discuss next steps, as per our attendance policy.

[If child IS Section 19 (medical needs):]

It is important that we work together and that [forename]'s attendance improves. The attendance contract is a more informal route aimed at improving attendance. We acknowledge that an Attendance Contract is voluntary, however supporting [forename]'s life chances and wellbeing is important and we are hopeful that the attendance contract will support this, as per our attendance policy, which outlines how we support medical needs.

To arrange the Attendance Contract meeting, please telephone Mrs Penny on 01223 568816 (option 1) or email absence@stbedes.cambs.sch.uk. We would like to see you in person, however this meeting can take place online if you would prefer.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

«Head of Year name»

«Head of Year Job Title»

Enc. Record of attendance
School attendance leaflet

Letter – Attendance contract successful and concluded

Dear «salutation»,

Re: child's name: «full name»; DOB: «DOB»; school: St Bede's Inter-Church School

Thank you for working with us to improve [forename]'s attendance. It is a pleasure to say that [forename]'s attendance has improved from «attendance»% to «attendance»%, since the Attendance Contract was agreed on [DD/MM/YYYY]. As of today, the Attendance Contract will now cease.

As per our attendance policy, should the attendance decline as a result of absences for unauthorised reasons, this could potentially result in a referral to the Local Authority for enforcement actions to be considered.

Offers of support remain open to you and [forename], where we strive to work together to remove barriers to attendance. If you have queries or want support, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

«Head of Year name»

«Head of Year Job Title»

Enc. Record of attendance
School attendance leaflet

Letter – Attendance contract not working – terminated because attendance has not improved

Dear «salutation»,

Re: child's name: «full name»; DOB: «DOB»; school: St Bede's Inter-Church School

It is disappointing that despite our offers of support, [forename]'s attendance has failed to improve sufficiently. In our warning letter dated [date], we warned that the Attendance Contract would be terminated if attendance did not improve. This is detailed in our attendance policy and in the Attendance Contract that was agreed between us on [date]. As [forename]'s attendance has not improved, we are now terminating the Attendance Contract.

As per our attendance policy, we will now be referring this matter to the Local Authority for enforcement actions to be considered. The Local Authority could issue a Penalty Notice Fine or initiate legal proceedings through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**. This may result in a fine of up to **£2500 and/or 3 months in prison**.

Offers of support remain open to you and [forename]. If you have queries or want support, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

«Head of Year name»

«Head of Year Job Title»

Enc. Record of attendance
School attendance leaflet

Letter – Attendance contract not working – terminated because parents want to terminate

Dear «salutation»,

Re: child's name: «full name»; DOB: «DOB»; school: St Bede's Inter-Church School

I'm sorry to hear that you no longer wish for the Attendance Contract to continue. We will therefore terminate the Attendance Contract, as per your request. As of today's date [DD/MM/YYYY], [forename]'s attendance is [attendance %].

As per our attendance policy, should the attendance decline, or if [forename] is absent for unauthorised reason(s), this can result in a referral to the Local Authority for enforcement actions to be considered. The Local Authority could issue a Penalty Notice Fine or initiate legal proceedings through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**. This may result in a fine of up to **£2500 and/or 3 months in prison**.

Offers of support remain open to you and [forename], where we strive to work together to remove barriers to attendance. If you have queries or want support, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

«Head of Year name»

«Head of Year Job Title»

Enc. Record of attendance
School attendance leaflet

Letter – Attendance contract not working and there are barriers to attendance

Dear «salutation»,

Re: child's name: «full name»; DOB: «DOB»; school: St Bede's Inter-Church School

Unfortunately, [forename]'s attendance has declined. We recognise that this could be due to a variety of reasons and are keen to continue to offer our support and to identify how these barriers are affecting [forename]'s attendance. We would like to consider what support can be put in place to help improve the situation.

As per our attendance policy, we would like to invite you to a meeting to review the Attendance Contract that was agreed on [date], where any new barriers to attendance can be discussed and support offered.

We would be grateful if you could attend a meeting with us:

Date: [date]

Time: [time]

Should this be inconvenient, please let us know and we can re-arrange. This meeting can take place in person, or online if you would prefer.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss any concerns you may have so we can continue to support your child in making good progress and I hope that you will work with us to improve «forename»'s attendance. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

«Head of Year name»

«Head of Year Job Title»

Enc. Record of attendance
School attendance leaflet

Letter – Attendance contract not working and there is a lack of engagement

Dear «salutation»,

Re: child's name: «full name»; DOB: «DOB»; school: St Bede's Inter-Church School

It is disappointing that despite our offers of support, [forename]'s attendance has failed to improve sufficiently. May we remind you that the Attendance Contract is only effective if everyone engages and works together to improve [forename]'s attendance.

As per our attendance policy, we would like to invite you to a meeting to review the Attendance Contract that was agreed on [date], where any new barriers to attendance can be discussed and support offered. If engagement and attendance do not improve, you are at risk of the Attendance Contract terminating, which may result in a referral to the Local Authority, who could issue a Penalty Notice Fine, or initiate legal proceedings through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**. This may result in a fine of up to **£2500 and/or 3 months in prison**.

We would like to avoid this if possible and continue to work with you to support you and [forename]'s. We would be grateful if you could attend a meeting with us:

Date: [date]

Time: [time]

Should this be inconvenient, please let us know and we can re-arrange. This meeting can take place in person, or online if you would prefer.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss any concerns you may have so we can continue to support your child in making good progress and I hope that you will work with us to improve «forename»'s attendance. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

«Head of Year name»

«Head of Year Job Title»

Enc. Record of attendance
School attendance leaflet

Letter - Notice to improve pathway not successful - referring for legal sanctions

Dear «salutation»,

Re: child's name: «full name»; DOB: «DOB»; school: St Bede's Inter-Church School

It is disappointing that despite our offers of support, [forename]'s attendance has failed to improve sufficiently. In our Notice To Improve letter dated [date], we warned yourself of the legal requirements and the expectations of the Notice To Improve as per our attendance policy.

As [forename]'s attendance has not significantly improved, this is notice that we will be ceasing the monitoring period and are referring this matter to the Local Authority for enforcement action to be considered.

The Local Authority could issue a Penalty Notice Fine or initiate legal proceedings through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**. This may result in a fine of up to **£2500 and/or 3 months in prison**.

Despite this referral to the Local Authority, offers of support remain open to you and [forename]. If you have queries or would like to engage with support, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Alistair Day
Head Teacher

ADay@stbedes.cambs.sch.uk

Enc. Record of attendance
School attendance leaflet

Letter – Suspected term time leave

Dear «salutation»,

Re: child's name: «full name»; DOB: «DOB»; school: St Bede's Inter-Church School

I am writing about «forename»'s absence from school from [date] to [date].

From information received from other sources we believe that this was due to term time leave. You have not followed the correct procedure for requesting leave of absence during term time.

We would be grateful if you could confirm the reason for the absence within 7 days of the date of this letter so this period can be recorded appropriately on the attendance register. However, if the absence was not due to exceptional circumstances but due to illness, please provide medical information to support this.

If we do not hear from you within the next 7 days, «forename»'s absence will be recorded as 'G' denoting an unauthorised term time leave.

If unauthorised absences are recorded, a Penalty Notice Fine can be issued by the Local Authority to each parent/carer in respect of each child who is absent from school. **If this is your first penalty notice, then the amount of the penalty is £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 22 to 28 days. If this is your second penalty notice since 19th August 2024, then the amount of the penalty is £160.** Failure to pay will result in legal proceedings being initiated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Please note if 2 Penalty Notices have been issued to a named parent in relation to the same child since the 19th August 2024 (over a 3-year period), then prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may be considered as an alternative to a Penalty Notice fine being issued.

Should a child be absent for term time leave for an extended period during term time (20 days or more) not authorised by the school, prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may also be considered.

Yours sincerely,

Alistair Day
Head Teacher

Letter – Unauthorised response to term time leave request

Dear «salutation»,

Re: child's name: «full name»; DOB: «DOB»; school: St Bede's Inter-Church School

Thank you for completing the term time leave request form as per procedure.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 was amended in

September 2013. The amendments made clear that Head teachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless 'exceptional circumstances' exist.

We have considered your application carefully and the reasons for the absence you have highlighted, however on this occasion we do not believe that the explanation provided can be justified as "exceptional circumstances".

Should you still decide to continue to take your child out of school during term time, then please note that the absence will be recorded as 'G' denoting an unauthorised term time leave.

If unauthorised absences are recorded, a Penalty Notice Fine can be issued by the Local Authority to each parent/carer in respect of each child who is absent from school. **If this is your first penalty notice, then the amount of the penalty is £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 22 to 28 days. If this is your second penalty notice since 19th August 2024, then the amount of the penalty is £160.** Failure to pay will result in legal proceedings being initiated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Please note if 2 Penalty Notices have been issued to a named parent in relation to the same child since the 19th August 2024 (over a 3-year period), then prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may be considered as an alternative to a Penalty Notice fine being issued.

See the table for example:

← Three-Year Period →		
<p>First Term Time Leave 10 sessions (5 days) or more. £80 for each child per parent.</p> <p>E.g. if two parents take 3 children away, the fine would be £80 x 3 = £240 per parent.</p> <p>The total would be £480.</p> <p>If you pay after 21 days it rises to £960.</p> <p>If you don't pay after 28 days = a prosecution.</p>	<p>Second Term Time Leave 10 sessions (5 days) or more. £160 for each child per parent.</p> <p>E.g. if two parents take 3 children away, the fine would be £160 x 3 = £480 per parent.</p> <p>The total would be £960.</p> <p>If you don't pay after 28 days = a prosecution.</p>	<p>Third Term Time Leave 10 sessions (5 days) or more. Prosecution.</p>

Should a child be absent for term time leave for an extended period during term time (20 days or more) not authorised by the school, prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may also be considered.

Yours sincerely,

Alistair Day
Head Teacher