

New Mills Primary School Behaviour policy

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At New Mills Primary School, we work hard to ensure that every child feels happy, safe and eager to come to school each day. We want school to be a place where children enjoy learning, build long-lasting friendships and feel supported to grow in confidence and independence.

We provide a warm, nurturing and welcoming environment where all children are valued and can thrive. Our staff are committed to creating positive experiences that make school a place children want to be. This includes a wide range of personal development opportunities such as music, outdoor learning and fun, enriching activities that help children to grow together.

We believe that good attendance is closely linked to children feeling settled, included and excited about school life. Through strong relationships, a caring ethos and a rich curriculum, we aim to make every day a positive one for every child.



Caring: We work hard to ensure that school is a happy, safe and nurturing place where children feel valued and want to come each day. Staff build strong, supportive relationships so that all children feel included, settled and able to thrive.



Collaborative: We foster a welcoming school community where children build lasting friendships and grow together. Staff, pupils and families work in partnership to create a positive environment in which everyone feels connected and supported.



Curious: We provide rich opportunities for children to learn and grow through a broad range of experiences. Our children are encouraged to explore, ask questions and develop a love of learning both inside and outside the classroom.



Creative: We offer plenty of opportunities for creativity through music, outdoor learning and fun, enriching activities. These experiences help children to express themselves, build confidence and enjoy coming to school.

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Derbyshire County Council Attendance Strategy 2026-2028. We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to understand and remove barriers to attendance
- Ensuring our school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance, Derbyshire's Attendance Strategy 2026-28, Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools, and School attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Maintained schools: Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2026 State-funded Schools Inspection Toolkit

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy meets the expectations outlined in the DfE's statutory guidance, and is published and publicised regularly so that it is easily accessible to pupils, parents/carers and staff
- Meeting with the headteacher or designated attendance lead to discuss attendance issues and ensure regular monitoring reports are considered
- Actively supporting and prioritising attendance improvement, and working together with school leaders to establish a whole school attendance culture
- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority (LA)
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Regularly reviewing, discussing and challenging attendance data and trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to ensure they are meeting the needs of pupils as experiences and barriers to attendance evolve
- Regularly reviewing attendance data at governing body meetings including a thorough examination of recent and historic trends at a school level, as well as benchmarking to comparator schools within the local authority area, region and nationwide
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance, which is evaluated and reviewed regularly

- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the designated senior leader to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Making sure training on attendance is included in the school's continued professional development offer for all staff so that, as a minimum, all staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances
  - The law and requirements of the school, including on the keeping of registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance
  - The processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. This will also include:
  - The skills needed to interpret and analyse attendance data
  - Any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance
- Making sure, as part of staff induction, that staff are aware of the school's safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods
- Make sure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place to respond to children absent from education, repeated absence and prolonged absence
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- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed, including to explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence, and the potential need for legal intervention in the future where engagement in support is proving challenging
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Attend the online DCC termly Attendance Network meetings and
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The designated senior leader for attendance will participate in regular 'targeting support meetings' with the local authority school attendance support team to review data, discuss and agree multi-agency action plans for persistently and severely absent pupils.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Claire Corrigan and can be contacted via 01663744453/ ccorrigan@newmills-pri.derbyshire.sch.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing daily attendance data (see section 9)
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed, including to explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence, and the potential need for legal intervention in the future where engagement in support is proving challenging
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The attendance officer is Kirsty Tomlin and can be contacted via k.tomlin@newmills-pri.derbyshire.sch.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office promptly.

3.6 School Administration Officer

School administration staff will:

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

3.7 Parents

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

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school to report their child's absence and explain the reason for the absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child. If the child is in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), provide more than 2 emergency contact numbers, where possible.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Work together with the school to achieve high attendance, including attending meetings with the school to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Kirsty Tomlin, Pastoral Lead who can be contacted via 01663744453, k.tomlin@newmills-pri.derbyshire.sch.uk

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session, immediately after lunch. The attendance register will be taken at the same time for all pupils and kept open for a maximum of 20 minutes. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present at the school
- Attending a place other than school
- Absent – leave of absence
- Absent – other authorised reasons
- Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause
- Absent – unauthorised absence

The attendance register is a record of the pupil's presence at the time it was taken. It will only routinely be amended if the reason for absence isn't known at the time it is taken, and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

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

The school day begins at 9:00am. Pupils are encouraged to arrive from 8:50am so that they are settled and ready to begin learning promptly at 9:00am.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.20am, after which the pupil will be recorded as absent. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.35pm, after which the pupil will be recorded as absent.

For pupils attending alternative provision (AP), the school will verify attendance daily with the provider and review placement safety and attendance at least half-termly.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible, by contacting the school office staff, who can be contacted via Class Dojo or by telephoning 01663744453.

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

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

4.3 Planned absence

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

Where possible, the pupil should:

- Be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, and attend school before/after their appointment
- Wear school uniform to their appointment, to make it easier to return to school afterwards

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the Unauthorised Absence (Code U). In UK education law, Code U counts as a full session of unauthorised absence.

School will regularly monitor punctuality and will begin school intervention procedures should recurring lateness be identified. When punctuality falls below 90% support steps will be taken by the school. Should the National Threshold Trigger (10 sessions (5 full school days) of unauthorised absence or Code U lateness within a rolling 10-week period) be met, a referral will be made to Derbyshire County Council (DCC).

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, this will be treated as a potential safeguarding issue and reported to the DSL.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, advice will be sought from Derbyshire County Council (DCC).
- Repeated or prolonged unexplained absences will be treated as a potential safeguarding issue and reported to Victoria Beecham (Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead).

The school recognises that children missing education are at significant risk of underachievement, abuse, neglect, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE) and other safeguarding concerns. The school will:

- Take all reasonable steps to identify pupils at risk of becoming children missing education
- Investigate unexplained absence
- Undertake appropriate welfare enquiries
- Work with the local authority and other agencies
- Comply with statutory pupil registration requirements
- Ensure that no pupil is removed from the school roll unless the lawful grounds for deletion are met and all required notifications have been made

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see the definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels. Attendance and punctuality data will be shared in the Autumn and Spring terms during Parent Evenings and during the Summer term as part of the child's annual written report.

5. Authorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment (paid or unpaid) abroad
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Study leave for a public examination

- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

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

In very exceptional circumstances, and if it is in the pupil's best interests, a temporary part-time timetable may be arranged. For example, if a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time.

Any part-time timetable in use will be short term and have a defined end point. Plans for supporting a pupil's return to full-time education will be clear and appropriate.

Part-time timetables will not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

Rare and unexpected circumstances that could not have been reasonably predicted. Examples include:

- Medical emergencies
- Family emergencies (e.g. death of a relative)]

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

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday, or other leisure or recreation. The school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent/carer does not apply in advance, a leave of absence will not be granted.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The school will not apply a blanket policy or automatic approval/refusal.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

5.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance:

- Where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s)
- The school considers 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' to be a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment
- If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance. Pupils should attend school on the days surrounding those set apart for religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances, a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

5.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, because the school premises are closed
- Where the pupil is in criminal justice detention, because of public health guidance or law, or because of any other unavoidable cause

5.4 Flexi-schooling

Our policies and practises around flexi-schooling are reflective of the latest guidelines from the DfE, Derbyshire County Council and OFSTED regarding the importance of full-time education.

We understand that some families want greater flexibility and in some circumstances, parents may wish for their child to receive some of their education in school, and some of their education at home.

At New Mills Primary School, we believe that when a pupil is flexi-schooled, there is always a risk that the child may not receive the broad and balanced education that they should and are entitled to receive.

As a result, it is not an arrangement we agree to lightly and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances or upon receipt of medical evidence being submitted from an external agency,

While parents/carers are free to request flexi-schooling arrangements, there is no legal entitlement for requests for flexi-schooling to be accepted. There will be no right of appeal against the headteacher's decision.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and not just penalise pupils for poor attendance.

7. Supporting pupils with poor attendance

The school will always work with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or the support is not engaged with, our school will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

The school will make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on penalty notices or prosecution. The school will decide whether to use each legal intervention after considering the individual family circumstances.

7.1 Attendance contract

We use attendance contracts as a form of attendance support.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular attendance at school. An attendance contract is not legally binding, but it provides a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate.

Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and the school cannot agree an attendance contract in a parent's absence.

Where an attendance contract would be an appropriate form of support, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent (and pupil if they are old enough to understand) to explain the purpose of an attendance contract and why using one would be beneficial in the family's circumstances. The parent will be asked to outline their views on the pupil's attendance, any underlying issues and how they believe these should be addressed. The meeting will allow them to share their views on the idea of an attendance contract and what type of support they think would be helpful.

Where a parent fails to attend the meeting without good reason or notification, further attempts will be made to contact them and arrange another meeting.

The school may enter into 1 attendance contract with all parents, or it may have separate attendance contracts for each parent.

Where parents fail to comply with an agreed attendance contract, the school may seek an alternative course of action. In the first instance, this will include discussions with the parent(s) to seek explanations and determine whether the attendance contract remains useful.

If a parent cannot comply with the attendance contract through no fault of their own, a meeting will be arranged with them to review and adjust it. If the parent fails to engage without a valid reason, the school will issue a warning that the contract may be terminated and alternative action taken.

If there are further instances of non-compliance, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent to review the attendance contract and discuss how it can be made to work. Following this meeting, the school will decide whether the non-compliance is undermining the contract to the extent that it is no longer useful, in which case an alternative course of action will be decided upon.

The school will keep a record of its decision-making and any non-compliance by the parent in respect of the attendance contract.

7.2 Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans and attendance contracts have been unsuccessful, we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and will set up a meeting.

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but **not** a criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be guilty of an offence. The local authority can prosecute for persistent non-compliance with the order, and parents will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000, upon conviction.

7.3 Notice to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

The national threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least 1 school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence. These sessions can be consecutive or not. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.

A notice to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

It will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with

- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered, if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

7.4 Penalty notices

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided and the national threshold has been reached.

The headteacher, local authority or the police can issue a penalty notice in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, and the Local Codes of Conduct maintained by the local authority.

Penalty notices will only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

If the school considers issuing a penalty notice, we will check with the local authority that it is in accordance with their code of conduct before doing so and then send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued. The school will consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where a pupil reaches the national threshold. We do not have a blanket rule for issuing or not issuing penalty notices.

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

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

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

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

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

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

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

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

8. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

8.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the pupil's needs, we will inform the local authority.

Where a parent expresses an intention to educate a child at home, the school will meet with the parent and any relevant professionals before a final decision is made to ensure that the best interests of the child have been considered. When a final decision has been made and written confirmation has been given by the parents, school will notify the Elective Home Education department at DCC.

Some pupils experience complex and overlapping barriers to attendance, including SEND, anxiety, mental health needs, safeguarding concerns, family stress, caring responsibilities, disadvantage, trauma, bereavement, housing instability or medical needs. We recognise that poor attendance is often a symptom of unmet need, and we will respond with a balance of high expectations, early intervention and tailored support.

We will work closely with families in a respectful, non-judgemental and solution-focused way, seeking to understand the underlying barriers and agreeing practical next steps together. Where appropriate, we will involve pastoral staff, the SENCo, safeguarding staff and external agencies to coordinate support.

We will also identify and remove in-school barriers to attendance by making reasonable adjustments where needed. This may include support from a trusted adult, safe spaces, phased returns, transition support, curriculum adaptations, emotional regulation strategies and other targeted provision to help pupils feel safe, included and ready to learn.

Support will be reviewed regularly and adapted where necessary. Our aim is to reduce barriers, strengthen relationships and help every pupil attend school consistently.

8.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health

The school recognises that worries about friendships, schoolwork, or examinations can cause attendance anxiety. However, regular attendance remains mandatory. Staff will communicate to parents that pupils are still expected to attend school regularly. Staff will work with families to mitigate anxious feelings in school as much as possible and remove barriers to attendance.

The school maintains high expectations for all pupils. For those facing complex barriers, including pupils with SEND or long-term health conditions, appropriate additional support will be provided to secure regular attendance.

In cases of both long-term physical or mental ill health, the school will:

- Facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible while supporting the underlying health issue
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability
- Consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate
- Make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness, or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days

Where a pupil has special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) the school will:

- Work in partnership with the parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care (EHC) plan is accessed
- Work in partnership with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day

- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements
- Consider 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 where a pupil has a disability
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate

In some cases, the school will not be able to fully support a pupil without the assistance of a range of other agencies. The school will:

- Make use of school nursing services and mental health support teams where they are available
- Consider whether additional support from other external partners (including the local authority, children and young people's mental health services, GPs or other health services) would be appropriate and make referrals
- Where external support is provided, work together with those services to deliver any subsequent support

If a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan, the school will:

- Communicate with the local authority if a pupil's attendance falls or they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to a pupil's needs
- Where possible, agree adjustments to its policies and practices that are consistent with the special educational provision set out in the education health and care (EHC) plan in collaboration with the parents
- Where needed, work with the local authority to review and amend the education health and care (EHC) plan to incorporate the additional or different attendance support identified

Parents should consult the NHS guidance Is my child too ill for school? when deciding whether to keep their child home due to illness. We will share this guidance with parents, and provide support in understanding it, in order to promote school attendance wherever appropriate.

8.3 Pupils absent due to other barriers to attendance

Our school is committed to ensuring that every pupil attends regularly and achieves their full potential. We recognise that some pupils face additional barriers to attendance, and we will respond to these with sensitivity, consistency and a strong focus on early support.

Our approach

We will take a **needs-led, inclusive approach** to attendance, working with pupils and families to remove barriers wherever possible. We will consider whether absence is linked to a pupil's special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantage, involvement with children's social care, caring responsibilities, or other personal circumstances affecting attendance.

Where absence concerns arise, we will:

- **Identify the barrier early** through attendance monitoring, pastoral oversight and communication with families
- **Listen carefully** to the pupil and family to understand the underlying reasons for absence
- **Work collaboratively** with relevant staff and external agencies where appropriate
- **Put in place support** that is proportionate, practical and reviewed regularly
- **Avoid assumptions or a one-size-fits-all response**, recognising that attendance difficulties may reflect unmet need rather than lack of willingness to attend
- **Maintain high expectations** for attendance, while also showing empathy and flexibility where this is justified

Pupils with SEND

We understand that some pupils with SEND may experience attendance difficulties due to:

- Anxiety, sensory needs or emotional regulation needs
- Difficulties with transitions or changes to routine
- Physical health needs or fatigue
- Access issues linked to communication, processing or social interaction

For pupils with SEND, we will:

- Work closely with the SENC**o**, class teachers, pastoral staff and parents
- Consider whether reasonable adjustments are needed to support attendance
- Use phased returns, adapted routines, or targeted pastoral support where appropriate
- Ensure attendance support is aligned with the pupil's EHCP, SEN Support plan or wider provision
- Review the impact of support regularly and adjust it as needed

Disadvantaged pupils

We recognise that disadvantaged pupils may face barriers including:

- Financial hardship
- Poor sleep, nutrition or access to uniform/equipment
- Transport difficulties
- Lower access to routines and home support
- Greater exposure to wider family stressors

For disadvantaged pupils, we will:

- Use attendance data to identify emerging patterns quickly
- Work with families to understand practical barriers
- Coordinate support with the pupil premium strategy and pastoral systems where relevant
- Signpost or offer help with uniform, equipment, breakfast provision, transport or other practical needs where possible
- Avoid punitive responses where the underlying issue is hardship, and instead prioritise support and re-engagement

Pupils known to local authority children's social care

We recognise that pupils who are known, or were previously known, to children's social care may have complex circumstances affecting attendance. These may include:

- Periods of instability at home
- Care arrangements or placement changes
- Anxiety linked to previous experiences
- Changes in family circumstances or safeguarding concerns

For these pupils, we will:

- Work in partnership with the appropriate social worker or local authority professionals, where relevant and lawful to do so
- Ensure attendance is considered alongside safeguarding and wider welfare needs
- Share concerns promptly through the school's safeguarding and attendance routes
- Maintain consistency, belonging and trust in school routines
- Avoid any response that may increase anxiety or disengagement

Pupils with other barriers to attendance

We also recognise that pupils may be absent due to other barriers such as:

- Being a young carer
- Mental health difficulties
- Bereavement or family illness
- Housing instability
- Travel or transport problems
- Temporary family crises
- Bullying or concerns about safety in school
- English as an additional language, where settling in takes time and support

Where these barriers exist, we will:

- Take a compassionate and holistic view of attendance
- Refer to appropriate pastoral, safeguarding or external support where needed
- Consider whether a pupil requires temporary adjustments, additional check-ins or a reduced-pressure return to school
- Work to rebuild confidence, routine and connection to school
- Monitor patterns closely so that support can be increased if needed

Principles underpinning our approach

Across all groups, our approach will be guided by the following principles:

- Attendance matters for all pupils
- Barrier identification should be early and proactive
- Support should be personalised
- Families should be treated as partners
- Safeguarding and attendance are closely linked
- The aim is re-engagement, not blame

Review and accountability

We will monitor attendance data for groups of pupils who may face additional barriers, including SEND, disadvantaged pupils, children in or previously known to social care, and pupils with other vulnerabilities. This will help us to identify trends, evaluate the impact of support and ensure no group is disproportionately affected.

Where attendance does not improve despite support, we will review the plan and consider whether further multi-agency involvement is needed.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, the school will inform the local authority.

8.4 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

We recognise that returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence can be challenging for pupils and families. Absence may have been caused by illness, medical treatment, bereavement, family circumstances, mental health difficulties, or other significant barriers. Our approach is to support a safe, calm and successful return to school, whilst maintaining high expectations for attendance and engagement.

Our approach

When a pupil returns after a lengthy absence, we will:

- Welcome the pupil back positively and sensitively
- Gather relevant information about the period of absence, where appropriate, to understand any ongoing needs or concerns
- Consider whether any temporary adjustments are needed to support reintegration
- Ensure staff are aware of the pupil's circumstances on a need-to-know basis only
- Monitor the pupil's attendance, wellbeing and engagement closely on return
- Review support regularly and adapt it if the pupil is struggling

Reintegration planning

For pupils returning after prolonged absence, we may put in place an individual reintegration plan. This may include:

- A phased return, where appropriate
- Reduced timetables only when justified and time-limited
- Key adult check-ins
- Clear routines and expectations
- Additional pastoral support
- Support with catching up on missed learning
- Adjustments linked to SEND, medical needs or emotional wellbeing
- Liaison with external professionals where relevant

The decision to use a phased return or any temporary adjustment will be made on a case-by-case basis, with the pupil's welfare, curriculum access and long-term attendance in mind. Any reduced timetable will be used only where necessary, kept under review and recorded in line with school procedures.

Supporting emotional and academic recovery

A lengthy absence may affect a pupil's confidence, relationships and academic progress. We will therefore:

- Help the pupil re-establish routines and a sense of belonging
- Provide reassurance and predictable support
- Identify gaps in learning and plan appropriate catch-up support
- Avoid overwhelming the pupil with unrealistic demands on return
- Work with parents and carers to ensure consistent messages and support at home

Medical and other unavoidable absences

Where absence has been unavoidable, such as due to illness or medical treatment, we will take a compassionate approach whilst still prioritising attendance where the pupil is well enough to return.

We may ask for medical evidence where absence is prolonged or frequent, in line with school procedures and attendance guidance, but we will do so proportionately and respectfully.

8.5 Prolonged absence for children in the EYFS

We understand that prolonged absence can be particularly significant for children in the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**, as regular attendance supports settling, attachment, communication, language development, independence and early learning routines.

Our approach in the EYFS

If a child in the EYFS is absent for a prolonged period, we will:

- Contact parents or carers promptly to understand the reason for absence
- Consider any safeguarding, health or welfare concerns
- Offer support to help the child return smoothly and confidently
- Work closely with families to re-establish routines and attendance expectations
- Consider whether additional settling-in support is needed on return
- Liaise with health professionals or other agencies where appropriate

Supporting return to reception

Children returning after prolonged absence may need extra time to readjust. We may:

- Use a phased or supported return where appropriate
- Reintroduce familiar adults, routines and environments gradually
- Offer enhanced transitions between home and school
- Provide reassurance to both child and family
- Monitor attendance closely after return

Importance of early attendance

We will emphasise to families that regular attendance in EYFS is important for:

- Building secure relationships
- Developing social skills
- Establishing routines and expectations
- Supporting language, communication and early literacy
- Identifying and responding to any emerging needs early

Working with families

We aim to work in partnership with parents and carers to overcome barriers to attendance as early as possible. Where prolonged absence in EYFS becomes a concern, we will consider whether further support, advice or referral to external services is needed.

Our aim is to ensure that all children in EYFS feel safe, welcomed and ready to re-engage with learning as quickly and successfully as possible.

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance and analysing attendance data

The school will monitor and analyse weekly attendance and punctuality data to identify emerging trends across cohorts, year groups and individual pupils. This will enable early identification of attendance concerns and the delivery of targeted support.

Regular individual attendance analysis will be carried out to identify pupils needing early support across all absence levels, including persistent and severe, and deliver targeted intervention before absence patterns become embedded.

The school will conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This will include analysis of:

- Pupils and cohorts, and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes

- Days of poor attendance and, where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance

When analysing patterns the school will look further into patterns of attendance within a session to ensure all pupils are attending all timetabled lessons.

The school will use its analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and school leaders (including the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and pupil premium lead).

The school will:

- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils in a year group with higher than average absence or pupils eligible for free school meals if their attendance falls behind that of their more advantaged peers
- Monitor the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented or specific cohorts that we have sought to target. The findings will be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies
- Benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional and national levels or performance of similar schools to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Record young carers in the school census and, where a pupil's caring role may be contributing to absence, the school will work in partnership with the pupil and their parents to understand barriers to attendance and to put appropriate support in place. Where needs extend beyond the school gates, the school will work with the local authority to facilitate access to support through local early help arrangements and other relevant organisations
- Ensure data is regularly monitored for pupils with long term illnesses and/or special educational needs and/or disabilities including governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide data and reports to the governing body to support its work

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

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system (MIS) so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Data will be submitted to the DfE and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

9.2 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 9.3 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Work with parents and any other relevant professionals to monitor and support the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, pupils known or previously known to children's social care, and pupils who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing

To facilitate timely collaborative working across partners, the school will share information from its registers with the local authority. This will include:

- New Pupil and Deletion returns
- Attendance returns
- Sickness returns

Where a pupil has a social worker and/or youth offending team worker, the school will inform the social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school.

9.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of the school's regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. If all avenues of support have been facilitated and the appropriate educational support or placements have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. The school will be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Work together with the local authority to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage the pupil
- The school will sensitively explore the reasons for absence, recognising school as a safe, supportive space and prioritising early help over immediate sanctions
- The school will prioritise support for severely absent pupils. Where necessary to remove barriers to attendance, this will include tailored attendance strategies, whole-family interventions, education, health and care (EHC) plan referrals, or alternative educational provision
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 7, above)

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Pupil mental health and wellbeing
- EYFS policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or

		• Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Roles and Responsibilities Summary

Step 1 - Expect and Monitor

For all pupils.

Parents and Carers are expected to

- Understand that there is a legal responsibility for parents/carers to ensure that their child receives a full-time education.
- Be aware of the school's attendance policy.
- Ensure their child attends school every day that it is open.
- Notify the school straight away when their child is unexpectedly absent. (e.g., illness)
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Where possible, book any medical appointments before the start and close of the school day.
- Where there are issues, including medical and health needs, that may affect their child's attendance, discuss these matters with a member of school staff.

Schools are expected to:

- School to ensure that the school culture is inclusive, engaging and has supportive environments.
- School to ensure that all pupils have a sense of belonging – vision and values are embodied in the school ethos.
- School to use a relational and restorative approach to encourage attendance.
- With pupils, promote the benefits of good attendance through systems and recognition.
- Have a clear school attendance policy, that is accessible to all, that is shared with all staff, pupils and parents/carers. This should include information on the graduated response to improve attendance, legal processes for non-attendance and unauthorised leave in term time.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance data and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence. This includes using DCC Local Authority attendance reporting procedures.
- There is a dedicated Senior Leader with overall responsibility to champion and improve attendance.
- School to ensure that all departments (SEND, Safeguarding, Pastoral and Attendance) work together to improve attendance across the whole school.
- Attendance Lead to regularly monitor and benchmark attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional and national levels. Implement proactive strategies for improvement and liaise with the Local Authority.
- Have a nominated Governor or a MAT Trustee to monitor the school's responsibility for attendance.
- Attendance Lead provides data and reports to support the work of the Governing Body or MAT Trustee.
- Facilitate staff training on attendance and direct staff to online training e.g. Relational Schools - Introductory Level Course via the S4S.
- Maintained schools to work with School Improvement Advisors.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

- School to use a self-assessment tool and DCC Inclusion Framework to evaluate their whole school approach to managing school attendance.

Local Authority is expected to:

- Have a strategic approach to improving attendance and make it a priority for all frontline services.
- Attendance Focus group to monitor progress of strategy and analyse data.
- The Focus group will benchmark against neighbouring local authorities (both geographic and statistical) and regional and national averages to identify trends.
- The Focus group will use attendance data analysis to set a vision for improving attendance with tangible short and longer term aims for particular cohorts of pupils, schools, neighbourhoods or towns to focus efforts.
- The Focus group will track local school attendance data to determine a strategic approach to prioritise pupil, cohort and school support.
- Education and Inclusion services in Derbyshire to triangulate support following analysis of data to improve attendance. It is a key focus for all frontline services.
- Inclusion Support Service (ISS) and Educational Psychology Service to offer training related to potential barriers to attendance e.g. EBSA, Restorative Practice, Anxiety.
- Through the Inclusion Framework, the Inclusion Support Advisory Teacher (ISAT) will discuss and advise on attendance practice and policy.
- ISAT to facilitate termly targeted attendance support meetings. Attendance data will be collected and used to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance. Actions and proactive strategies will be agreed.
- In conjunction with Lead Officers, ISATs will support schools to analyse their attendance data and how it compares locally and nationally.
- School Improvement Advisors to liaise with the Lead Officers and ISATs for maintained schools.
- Virtual School to support with pupil relational plans.
- Through Attendance Network Meetings, facilitate opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice, updates, emerging patterns and trends.
- Share updates, effective practice and success stories through a termly newsletter.

Step 2 - Listen and Understand

For pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent (90-95%).

Parents and Carers are expected to

- Work with school and the Local Authority to understand barriers to their child's attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Attend meetings, where necessary, working in collaboration with school.

Schools are expected to:

- SLT and Attendance Lead to proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.

- Nominated Governor or MAT Trustee to regularly review attendance data and support school leaders to focus support on pupils and cohorts.
- School to employ strategies from the Derbyshire Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Toolkit.
- Meet with pupils and parents/carers, listen and understand their barriers to attendance. Agree how all partners can work together to remove the barriers.
- School to make appropriate reasonable adjustments in line with the school's attendance policy and with regard to their legal duties under The Equality Act 2010.
- Signpost to other services/agencies if out of school barriers are identified. Act as the lead practitioner.
- School to signpost families to support groups: Parent Carer Voice group / Derbyshire Information Advice Support Service.
- Pastoral Support to work with the pupil and parents/carers. Keep detailed chronology of visits, contacts and outcomes.
- Pupil voice activity to be facilitated by a member of school staff.
- School to ensure that all departments (SEND, Safeguarding, Pastoral and Attendance) work together to improve attendance across the whole school.
- Take an active part in a multi-agency approach with the Local Authority and other agencies.
- If the family meets the local threshold and not already known to Social Care, carry out an Early Help assessment and act as the lead professional, where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. If it does not meet threshold, involve the school's Family Support Worker. This can include home visits.

Local Authority is expected to:

- As part of the termly targeted attendance support meeting, ISAT to discuss pupils who are at risk of persistence absence or severely absence and signpost to further support and services.
- Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance e.g. DCC Local Offer, Neuro Hubs and services in the school's locality.
- If the family meets Early Help threshold and there are multiple needs, the ISAT will speak with the school regarding a referral to ISS and whether this is appropriate. Lead practitioner to be agreed.
- Derbyshire provides additional support to schools through the Inclusion Panel Funding process. Where appropriate schools may wish to apply for this funding to provide a bespoke intervention package.
  Inclusion Panel Funding Offer

Step 3 - Facilitate and Support

For pupils who are persistent or severely absent (less than 90%)

Parents and Carers are expected to

- Work with school and the Local Authority to understand barriers to their child's attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered - including any parenting contract or voluntary Early Help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Schools are expected to:

- Schools should continue to support pupils who are at risk of becoming peristenly absent (refer to Step 2).
- School to use their own internal provision offer. e.g. Forest School, Nurture, Positive Play, Bushcraft.
- Review pastoral support and increase and adapt support offer, where applicable. Keep detailed chronology of visits, contacts and outcomes.
- Consider a parent contract and/or Early Help referral to support the family with actions to improve attendance.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the school/s of any siblings.
- Speak to the school's ISAT and discuss whether a targeted and specialist referral should be made.
- School to use a multi-professional approach and work collaboratively with education, health and social care professionals. Create an action plan with short-term targets to improve attendance.
- School may wish to consider applying for additional funding through the Derbyshire Inclusion Panel process.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care.
- If there is a lack of engagement, hold formal conversations with parents/carers of the potential legal interventions.

Local Authority is expected to:

- Schools should continue to support pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent (Refer to Step 2).
- ISAT to facilitate structured conversations regarding the school's graduated response for a pupil. This can include: the environment, curriculum, sensory, communication, SEND. If applicable, the PINS project and ND Advocates can be referred to.
- ISAT to consider whether a targeted and specialist referral is needed to support improving attendance and liaise with school. If applicable, triangulate support within Derbyshire Services.
- If applicable, facilitate a pupil voice activity. For example, Ideal/Not Ideal School, MEP cards (Multi-Element Plan), PACT (Planning a Change Together), PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope).
- Begin to consider a multi-agency approach across Education and Inclusion Services due to risk in the wider community. This can include ISS, Early Help, Social Care, SEND, Virtual Schools, Educational Psychology, etc. When appropriate, include Health professionals. A plan will be written, monitored and reviewed by a lead professional.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.
- Derbyshire provides additional support to schools through the Inclusion Panel Funding process. Where appropriate schools may wish to apply for this funding to provide a bespoke intervention package.

  Inclusion Panel Funding Offer

Step 4 - Formalise Support

Complex Support (less than 50%).

Parents and Carers are expected to

- Work with school and the Local Authority to understand barriers to their child's attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered - including any parenting contract or voluntary Early Help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Schools are expected to:

- Continue support as for persistently absent pupils (See steps above)
- School to formalise the attendance process with parents/carers in order to improve attendance.
- School to utilise internal and/or external alternative provision, where appropriate, and to ensure attendance and engagement is accurately recorded and monitored.
- It is expected that when school commissions external support, they use the DFE guidance when quality assuring provision.
- School may wish to consider applying for additional funding through the Derbyshire Inclusion Panel process.
- School to make a referral to the Inclusion Support Services depending upon the needs presented. – Inclusion Support Advisory Teachers.
  – Sensory Support Team.
  – Engagement Team.
  – Alternative Pathways.
- Links to these services can be found on the Derbyshire Local Offer website
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.

Local Authority is expected to:

- Continue support as for persistently absent pupils (See steps above)
- All Children's Services must consider school attendance as part of their work around the CYP and to ensure that all relevant services are engaged in supporting the CYP, school and family.
- ISAT to consider whether a targeted and specialist referral is needed to support improving attendance and liaise with school. If applicable, triangulate support within Derbyshire Services.
- Ensure a pupil voice activity is facilitated. For example, Ideal/Not Ideal School, MEP cards (Multi-Element Plan), PACT (Planning a Change Together), PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope).
- When the ISAT is actively involved, ensure that all relevant information is communicated clearly between Derbyshire services.
- Engage in a multi-agency approach across Local Authority Services due to risk in the wider community. This can include ISAS, Early Help, Social Care, SEND, Virtual Schools, Educational Psychology, etc. When appropriate, include Health professionals. A plan will be written, monitored and reviewed by a lead professional.
- Depending on the circumstances, work jointly with the school to formalise support including attendance contracts or education supervision orders.

- The Local Authority should consider a case of neglect if absences continue to be unauthorised once all avenues of support including appropriate educational support or placements have been facilitated by schools and the local authority.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).
- Derbyshire provides additional support to schools through the Inclusion Panel Funding process. Where appropriate schools may wish to apply for this funding to provide a bespoke intervention package.

  Inclusion Panel Funding Offer

Step 5 - Enforcement

Non-attendance.

Parents and Carers are expected to

- Work with school and the Local Authority to understand barriers to their child's attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered - including any attendance contract or voluntary Early Help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Schools are expected to:

- School should exhaust all other options prior to referring a case to the Local Authority for legal intervention.
- Where it can be evidenced that a parent/carer is failing in their duty to ensure their child receives a suitable education, the school should follow the guidance provided and refer to the Local Authority attendance team for legal intervention.

Local Authority is expected to:

- Process requests for legal intervention received from school in line with the DfE working together to improve school attendance 2026 guidance.
- Provide schools with clear guidance and documentation to ensure successful outcomes including referral forms and template letters where appropriate.
- Undertake all legal processes related to school attendance on behalf of schools.
- Provide schools with updates and outcomes of legal processes to assist their ongoing attendance management procedures.

Request for Legal Action Flow Chart

