



Attendance and Absence Policy

Surfleet Primary School

Created by Helen Joyce and James McCullough	Ratified by Trustees July 2024
Next Review due July 2025	

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1. Statement of Intent

Keystone Academy Trust believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

The trust understands that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, Keystone Academy Trust will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at each school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

A whole-trust approach is taken to secure good attendance, recognising the impact that efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

The trust is committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring the attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The trust's Attendance Officer is Alison Ward and can be contacted via:

alison.ward@tr.keystonemat.org.

At Surfleet Primary School, staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the academy's own Attendance Champion, Rick Chipperfield, for queries or concerns about attendance in the first instance, before approaching the trust's Attendance Officer.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Concerns and Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the trust.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the trust's ethos and policies.
- Ensuring attendance training for all relevant staff is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the trust leaders to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Concerns and Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- Ensuring there is a **Children Missing Education Policy** in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive appropriate training on attendance

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of staff to the role of Attendance Champion.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at 8:50 am and 1:10 pm.

The trust Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing trust-wide attendance data, adapting trust wide strategies where needed.
- Providing training for staff as required in relation to attendance.
- Supporting leaders when enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance when needed.

The Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Analysing and monitoring attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the local authority of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.

- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the local authority.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, providing at least 14 days' notice.
- Booking any medical appointments outside the hours of the school day where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance by abiding by attendance contracts.

4. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed at 9:20 am.
- Not attending the registered school for any reason.

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed at 9:20 am.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school.

5. Attendance Expectations

The trust has very high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

At Surfleet Primary School the school day starts at **8:50 am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by **8:50 am**. Pupils will have a morning break at **10:20 am**, which will last until **10:40 am**, and a lunch break at **12:10 pm**, which will last until **1:10 pm** – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **8:55 am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at **9:20 am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by **1:15 pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at **1:20 pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

6. Absence Procedures

At Surfleet Primary School, parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before **9:00 am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day. Parents should contact the school each subsequent day of absence, ideally before the school day begins.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school. If the school cannot make contact and has not received notification, school will conduct a home visit on day one of a child's absence. If a child

continues to be absent for three days or more, a home visit will be conducted between the third and fifth day of absence.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school information system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Attendance Champion. The school will inform the local authority, three times a year, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 92%, the Attendance Champion will inform the pupils' parent via a letter, that they are at risk of becoming persistently absent.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, the Attendance Champion will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the local authority have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

7. Attendance Register

Keystone Academy Trust uses Integris to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The trust will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole or partial school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon

- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When a school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for four years.

8. Authorising Parental Absence Requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least 14 days prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is highly unlikely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's attendance record is already below 90% for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school to be registered and then take their child to the appointment afterwards.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the local authority which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education. These arrangements will be approved by the local authority who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the local authority issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the local authority; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the local authority and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the local authority, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96%. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least 14 days in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

9. SEND and Health-related Absences

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

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, each school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. Each school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

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

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

- Inform the local authority if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the local authority with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan utilising the local authority's Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) pathway to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

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

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

10. Leave during Lunch Times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, 14 days in advance, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Pupils will leave the school premises within 5 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

11. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by **8:50 am** and **1:10 pm**, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

12. Absent Pupils

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - The hall and corridors
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after **10 minutes**, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The absent pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced and presented to trust senior leaders (CEO and Deputy CEO) and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

13. Attendance Intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Attendance Champion, supported by senior leaders, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Implementing school attendance panels.
 - Draw up, agree and sign attendance contract.
 - Issuing a formal warning letter.
 - Engaging with local authority attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the '[Monitoring and analysing absence](#)' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

At Surfleet Primary School will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- [Weekly raffle with prizes available](#)
- [End of term/end of year certificates](#)
- [Publicise weekly attendance in assembly and to parents](#)

Extra-curricular opportunities and events (such as school discos, sporting tournaments) will be considered a privilege, and may be withdrawn if attendance is below 90%. The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

14. Working with parents to improve attendance

Each school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Each school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

Parents will be made aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Attendance Champion will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the Attendance Champion will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the Attendance Champion will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the local authority, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

15. Persistent Absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and persistent absence, such as:

- Children in need
- Looked After Children
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

A number of methods will be utilised to help support pupils at risk of persistent absence to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Regular check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- School attendance panel.
- Attendance contract.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an Education Health Care plan or Individual Health Plan may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

For pupils whose absence is below 80%, each school will work collaboratively with the trust Attendance Officer to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance, engaging wider services where necessary.

For pupils whose attendance is below 50%, the school's Attendance Champion and the trust Attendance Officer will work with the local authority and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of persistent absence also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe persistent absence following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

16. Legal Intervention

Sufficient time will be given for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term (i.e. 6-week term), the Attendance Champion will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents in the form of a school attendance panel every four weeks.
- Working with the local authority to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the local authority's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the local authority to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the local authority a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. The local authority will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an ESO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

17. Monitoring and Analysing Absence

The Attendance Champion will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly, at least fortnightly, to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

Each school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of persistent absence.

The Attendance Champion will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data in line with the local authority's termly support meeting to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Attendance Champion will provide regular reports to relevant staff to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The Attendance Champion will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The local governing board will regularly review attendance data (via the headteacher report), including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support senior leaders in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

Each school will also benchmark its attendance data against trust, regional and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The board of trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

18. Training of Staff

Keystone Academy Trust recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance.
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances.
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers.
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it.

Trust leaders will ensure dedicated and enhanced attendance training is provided to key staff through the local authority – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

19. Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Surfleet Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. On admission to the school and every two years thereafter in September, all parents will receive an information letter (see Appendix 1), highlighting their responsibility for their child's attendance and the potential use of a Penalty Notice for poor attendance.
2. A spreadsheet is sent to the Attendance Champion detailing weekly, termly and annual attendance to date.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided and will be reviewed on the pupil's return.

4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence. Senior leaders to be informed of N codes on the first day.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls below 95% a phone call home is made, raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls to 92%, the Attendance Champion speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The Attendance Champion will send home an 'amber' attendance letter. They will also make a phone call home to discuss this with parents. The letter will have a attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
7. If a pupil's attendance falls below 92%, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the Attendance Officer contacts the parents to discuss this.
8. The pupil's attendance is monitored for four weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a school attendance panel meeting in school with the Attendance Champion to set attendance targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, the school may conduct a home visit.
9. After the four weeks monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the Attendance Champion to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 95% or above.
10. If targets set during a school attendance panel are not met, the Attendance Champion will call another school attendance panel meeting to draw up a attendance contract for attendance. The Attendance Champion may employ the services of the trust Attendance Officer to support the process. Another four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents. If following another four-week monitoring period, there is no improvement in the child's attendance, a fixed-penalty notice may be issued.

20. Monitoring and Review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is a minimum 96% – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the school website.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the CEO. The next scheduled review date for this policy is July 2025.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

21. Appendix 1

16 July 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS REGARDING PENALTY NOTICES FOR ATTENDANCE

Here at Surfleet Primary School, we believe that if a child is to make the best progress they can, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We are grateful for the continued positive partnership we enjoy between parents and school, ensuring the very best outcomes and opportunities for children to flourish.

Attendance Percentage	Description
96 to 100%	As expected
91 to 95.9%	At risk of persistent absence
80 to 90.9%	Persistent absence
50.9 to 79.9%	At risk of severe absence
Below 50%	Severe absence

The Department for Education has issued updated statutory guidance which comes into effect on 19 August 2024. Part of a school's duty is to remind parents of their legal responsibility to ensure a high level of attendance for their child/ren. When attendance is poor (below 90%) for those children of compulsory school age i.e. the term in which they turn five, a Penalty Notice may be issued. Please be advised that this letter acts as a warning letter until September 2026.

To request a leave of absence from school for your child/ren, you should apply at least 14 days in advance by contacting the school office in writing via email. Any exceptional circumstances that you would like to be considered must be clearly set out in the written request. You must only then remove your child/ren if the absence has been authorised and notified to you in writing.

I am unable to authorise a request for a leave of absence when the reason for the absence is a family holiday. In circumstances deemed exceptional by me, some requests (or parts of) may be granted although this is extremely rare.

Please accept this letter to you as a formal warning that if you remove your child/ren from school during term time whether you have requested the leave or not and when it is not deemed to be exceptional circumstances and/or has not been approved by the school, a Penalty Notice may be issued by the local authority. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in further legal action being taken against you by the local authority.

A Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children attending their school under the following legal framework:

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act
- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty of either £160.00 or £80.00 per parent per child for a 1st offence if paid within the specific timeframe.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Rick Chipperfield
Headteacher