Attendance Policy 2026-2027

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1. Aims

Attendance: Statement of Intention

At Reach South Academy Trust, excellent attendance is fundamental to ensuring that every child and young person has an opportunity to thrive, aspire, achieve well and fulfil their full potential.

We are committed to creating a positive culture of attendance and belonging across all Reach South academies. Our approach is based on high expectations for every pupil, strong relationships with families, early identification of concerns and effective support to overcome barriers to attendance.

Regular attendance supports learning, wellbeing and wider development and helps children to remain connected to their school, their peers and the opportunities that education provides.

In line with the Department for Education's Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance, our academies will work jointly with pupils and families to understand the individual barriers affecting attendance and work in partnership to remove them. We recognise that the reasons for absence can be complex and that effective attendance improvement requires a balance of support, challenge and clear expectations.

Attendance is everyone's responsibility and we fully recognise that attendance and safeguarding are inextricably linked. Leaders, teachers, pastoral staff, attendance teams and other professionals all have a part to play in developing a whole-school culture which promotes the benefits of good attendance. Parents and carers are important partners in this work, and we will seek to build respectful and constructive relationships with families so that difficulties are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.

We recognise that attendance is closely linked to educational achievement, wellbeing, safeguarding and inclusion. Children who are persistently or severely absent may require additional support, and academies will consider the particular circumstances and needs of vulnerable pupils, including those experiencing physical or mental ill health or with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The statutory guidance specifically expects schools to give these pupils additional consideration and support.

Across Reach South, academies will use attendance information intelligently to identify patterns of absence early, understand the underlying causes and target support towards the pupils and groups who need it most. Attendance and absence data will be regularly analysed so that leaders can evaluate the impact of their actions and respond quickly where improvement is required. This directly reflects expectations within the statutory guidance.

Where barriers cannot be addressed by the academy alone, we will work collaboratively with local authorities and other relevant partners and services, particularly where absence is persistent or severe or there are wider concerns about a child's education or welfare.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and consistent Trust-wide framework for maintaining high levels of attendance and improving attendance where concerns arise, while enabling each academy to respond appropriately to the needs of its pupils, families and local community.

Each academy has its own specific attendance practices that reflect its local context, the needs of its pupils and families and day-to-day attendance procedures. These arrangements sit within this overarching Trust policy providing specific localised approaches to promoting, supporting and improving attendance.

Reach South Academy Trust will provide strategic oversight, support and challenge to ensure that attendance remains a priority across the Trust. Academy and Trust leaders will seek to ensure that school staff:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation, Terminology and Key Documents

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The latest DFE statutory guidance and Working together to improve school attendance (2026).
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Department for Education guidance, alongside local authority attendance arrangements and Reach South Academy Trust policies.
- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996.
- 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
- School census guidance.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.
- Ofsted’s 2026 Toolkit.

Working together to improve school attendance sets expectations for schools and academy trusts to maintain high levels of attendance and to provide support for pupils who are persistently or severely absent, or at risk of becoming so.

Reach South Academy Trust recognises that regular attendance is fundamental to children's learning, wellbeing and wider development. Being in school regularly helps children remain connected to learning, their peers and the wider life of the school, promotes a sense of belonging and supports positive educational outcomes.

This policy establishes the overarching Trust-wide expectations for attendance. It should be read alongside Reach South Academy Trust's suite of policies, academy-specific attendance arrangements and relevant local authority procedures. Each Academy will ensure that its local attendance arrangements reflect the needs and circumstances of its pupils, families and community, while remaining consistent with Trust expectations and statutory requirements.

Our approach is based on the principle of “Working together to improve attendance.” Academies will seek to build strong relationships with pupils and families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance, and work in partnership with families to remove those barriers wherever possible. Academies will develop and maintain a whole-school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance and ensures that expectations are understood by leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers.

Academies will maintain accurate admission and attendance registers, have effective day-to-day processes for identifying and following up absence, and regularly analyse attendance and absence information to identify individual pupils and groups requiring additional support. Where absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, academies will work collaboratively with families, the Local Authority and other relevant partners to provide appropriate support and improve attendance. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]

Particular consideration will be given to children and young people who may experience additional or complex barriers to attendance, including pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), pupils experiencing physical or mental ill health, children with a social worker, young carers and other vulnerable pupils. The statutory guidance specifically requires schools to be particularly mindful of pupils whose absence is associated with physical or mental ill health or SEND and to provide additional support.

Attendance will also be considered within the wider context of safeguarding, inclusion, behaviour, wellbeing and educational achievement. Regular school attendance is identified by the Department for Education as a strong protective factor, particularly for vulnerable children and young people.

For the purposes of this policy:

- Parents/carers includes those with parental responsibility and those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, as applicable.
- Staff includes adults working for or on behalf of an Academy or the Trust, including employees and other adults whose roles carry responsibilities relating to pupil attendance.
- Local Authority (LA) refers to the relevant Local Authority with statutory responsibilities for school attendance and related functions.

- Attendance Champion/Attendance Lead refers to the senior leader or designated member of staff responsible for leading attendance within the Academy, in accordance with Academy and Trust arrangements.

We recognise that each RSAT school may operate their Attendance policy differently, whilst keeping all statutory procedures and requirements in place, schools will have their own autonomy to personalised rewards and school level approaches which make a difference locally.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Local Governance Board

The Local Governance Board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil all statutory expectations/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.
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs.
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance.
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues.
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers.
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and

improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Ensuring that the Attendance Improvement Plan and maintained for its impact by the appropriate leaders.

3.2 The Headteacher / Head of School

The Headteacher/ Head of School 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 Attendance Officer Assistant Headteacher or EWO 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.
- 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 Attendance Champion

A designated senior leader who is known at school as the Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance across the whole school.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.

- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance.

- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/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.

Our designated Attendance Champion is Jeanne-Marie Woodley and can be contacted via telephone 01752 221927 and/or email address jwoodley@millbayacademy.org.

3.4 The Attendance Officer and Family Liaison for Attendance

The school attendance officers are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9).
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the Headteacher.
- Working with Education Welfare Officers (EWO) to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Assistant headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.
- Seeking support from the EWO as required.

Our Attendance Officer is Ade Adewunmi and can be contacted via telephone 01752 221927 and/or email address adewunmi@millbayacademy.org.

Our Family Liaison for Attendance is Joanna Tasker and can be contacted via telephone 01752 221927 and/or email address jtasker@millbayacademy.org

3.5 Form tutors and class teachers

Form tutors and 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 by 9:30 am and 12:45pm

3.6 School Reception Team and Attendance Reporting System

Our School Reception Team will:

- Ensure that parents are directed to ‘StudyBugs’ to report absence on the day, before 8:30am
- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school’s Arbor system if StudyBugs cannot be accessed.

- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Attendance Officers where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

3.7 Parents & Carers

Where this policy refers to a parent / carer, 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 school on time every day (if on a reduced timetable or at alternative provision they must also attend as scheduled and on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence, why there is an absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- 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 Form Tutor or Head of Year, who can be contacted via 01752 221927.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils on roll at any RSAT Primary/ Secondary or Special School are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time.
- Attend every timetabled session, on time (Secondary only).

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

At Millbay Academy 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. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending a place other than school
- Absent
- Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

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

Years 7- 11 MONDAY-THURSDAY	
School Open to Students	7:45 - 8:30 for Breakfast Club in Main Atrium
Students arrival to school (Back gates open)	8:00 - 8:20 (KS3 to gather in The Union and KS4 in the Community Hub)
P0 - Briefing/Tutor Time	8:30 - 9:00
P1	9:00 - 10:00
P2	10:00 - 11:00
Break	11:00 - 11:20
P3	11:20 - 12:20
P4	12:20 - 1:20
Lunch	1:20 - 2:00
P5	2:00 - 3:00
P6 Tutor Time	3:00 - 3:15
P7 Same day detentions/Clubs/Year 10-11 additional sessions	3.15 - 4.15

Years 7-11 FRIDAY	
School Open to Students	7:45 - 8:30 for Breakfast Club
Breakfast Club Large Atrium	8:00 - 8:30
P0 Briefing/Tutor Time	8:30 - 9:00
P1	9:00 - 10:00
P2	10:00 - 11:00
Break	11:00 - 11:40 *extended break Friday
P3	11:40 - 12:40
P4	12:40 - 1:40
Learning Review/Careers Tutor led session	1:40 - 2:00
End of the Day	2:00 - Students leave
Detention/Bonus Time support	2:00 - 2:30

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

The Morning register / Register for the for the first session will be taken at 8:30 and will be kept open until 9:00.

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 Afternoon register/ Register for the second session will be taken at 12:20

and will be kept open until 12:50.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's/ student's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am, or as soon as practically possible, by recording on the StudyBugs app, or if there is a technical issue, by emailing attendance@millbayacademy.org

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.

A copy of the appointment confirmation can be sent digitally via StudyBugs or emailed to attendance@millbayacademy.org. Alternatively, a paper copy can be provided to reception.

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 strongly encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Most surgeries are able to accommodate this.

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 appropriate code

Students who are late will be issued a same day 30 minute detention. Repeated lateness before 9am will result in communication home from the form tutor. Repeated lateness after 9am will result in a referral to the attendance team who will offer supportive meetings and possible third party agency support. If a resolution is not found and punctuality fails to improve, the case will be referred to the Local Authority for potential escalation.

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/guardian on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit
- 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 the school will apply to the Local Authority to issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 7 below), as appropriate

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 in the following ways:

- Three times a year via termly written reports.
- 6 times a year (start of each half term) via a welcome back letter

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 abroad.
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.
- Study leave.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable/ reduced 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Bereavement: The death or funeral of a close family member
- Family crisis: A severe housing crisis or emergency respite/medical care needs
- Service deployment: A parent or guardian leaving or returning home from military deployment (where operational leave coincides)
- One-off official events: Attending a ceremony or significant life event that the child cannot miss (such as a parent's graduation or a 1-day family wedding of a direct relative, subject to school agreement)
- Elite performance/arts: Participation in authorised, high-level regional, national, or international sports or arts events where the child is a direct competitor or performer

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

hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted using the **Plymouth City Council School absence request** form as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. The completed form may be emailed to attendance@millbayacademy.org or handed into reception. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for 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). 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
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

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.

MIllbay Academy strive to:

- Build a Welcoming Climate: Greeting students and families warmly at the school gate, foster a strong sense of belonging, offering breakfast club, social time activities and a range of extra-curricular clubs and events

- Make Purpose Clear: Communicate why daily attendance matters to academic and social success, rather than just quoting abstract statistics or percentage thresholds.
- Celebrate and Reward Positive Improvement: Use school-wide recognition, weekly individual and tutor awards, team competitions and community events to highlight good and improved attendance and punctuality
- Proactive Communication: Reach out with positive phone calls home when students have achieved both academically and in terms of attendance and punctuality

7. Supporting Pupils with Poor Attendance

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.

7.1 Attendance contract

If your school and/or local authority offers parents an attendance contract, add: 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 where previous support has not worked or would not have been 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 discuss how we can work in partnership to improve the pupil's attendance.

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 parents to seek explanations and determine whether the attendance contract remains useful. Where there is further non-compliance following these discussions, the school may take further action.

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** 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 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.

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:

- 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
- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- 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

The Headteacher/ Head of School (or senior member of staff authorised by the Headteacher/ Head of School) is required to inform the local authority who can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the attendance patterns and engagement reaches the threshold for a penalty notice, we will check with Plymouth City Council's Local Authority Targeted Support Team and submit the case paperwork as required.

Before the issue of 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
- 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 can sometimes only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority. 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 these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

8. Supporting Pupils/ Students 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:

- Offer supportive attendance meetings to discuss barriers to good attendance and agree an individual support plan including any in-school adjustments and adaptive teaching strategies
- Signpost external agencies who may be best placed to holistically help support families with issues occurring out of the school environment

8.2 Pupils Absent due to Mental /Physical Health Needs

If the school is made aware of any mental or physical health needs that are affecting a student's attendance, we will:

- Meet with the student and parents to create an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) detailing needs and adjustments required
- Where appropriate, apply reasonable adjustments to support a phased return to full time education
- Targeted intervention sessions within the school day to support social and emotional skills
- Liaise with medical professionals such as GPs and Educational Psychologists to ensure needs are understood and met, where possible, within the mainstream school environment

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

If the school is aware of any other barriers to a student's attendance, we aim to:

- Initiate Proactive Early Intervention: Act as soon as an initial drop or change in attendance is noticed rather than waiting for chronic absence to set in
- Assess Underlying Causes: Use frameworks like Assess-Plan-Do-Review or explore Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) factors (such as school anxiety, social stress, or sensory overload)
- Make Reasonable Adjustments (SEND): Implement support, trusted adults, or flexible timetables (such as phased returns or part-time arrangements)
- Collaborate with Families: Invite parents and carers into open, non-judgmental conversations to understand the family and pupil's unique context
- Engage Specialist Support: Connect with Educational Psychologists, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Early Help teams, or local authority inclusion services

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

Supporting a student returning to school after a lengthy absence—whether due to physical illness, injury, or Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) — requires prioritising emotional safety and connection before academic catch-up.

Where a student has had a significant period of absence the schools aims to provide:

- Key adult contact prior to return as a low pressure out reach
- Meeting in school to determine support required and appropriately staged and timed reintegration
- Individual Support Plan with agreed actions and target outcomes over a period of time
- Access to Google Classroom to make learning accessible after missed teaching

9. Attendance Monitoring

9.1 Monitoring Attendance

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 so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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

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

9.2 Analysing Attendance

The school will:

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

9.3 Strategic Use of 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 severed absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including Special Educational Needs coordinators, designated Safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- 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.

9.4 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:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 7, above)

10. Monitoring arrangements

The Local Governance Board (LGB) will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the Attendance policy with the school. A member of the LGB will be responsible for Attendance and work closely with the Attendance Champion and senior leaders to address poor attendance and support positive attendance practices.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behavior policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- Pupil/student Mental Health & Wellbeing
- EYFS
- Children Missing Education / Children Absent from Education Policy
- Children Who Cannot Attend School Policy

- Missing Pupils

12. Promoting and Celebrating Attendance

Millbay Academy consistently rewards not just good attendance but improved attendance. There are weekly awards, tutor challenges, pizza parties, movie afternoons and reward trips.

Our Friday whole school briefing gives staff the opportunity to give “shout outs” and good news stories as well as awards for most improved individuals and groups.

Rewards trips include cinema and theatre tickets along with day trips to national landmarks such as the Tower of London and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

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

		● 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
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