



East Midlands Academy Trust

Attendance Policy 2024/25

'Every child deserves to be the best they can be'

Scope: East Midlands Academy Trust & Academies within the Trust	
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Owner: Thompson Team / Head of Education	

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Revision History

Revision Date	Revisor	Description of Revision
March 2024 v1.1	JL	Addition of reference to text message and email communication, incl Appendix F Tidied pupil absence safeguarding procedure diagram
February 2024 v1	TT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Policy

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1. AIMS AND PURPOSE

The following policy sets out the mechanisms and processes for attendance monitoring within EMAT but fundamentally we believe a strong partnership with parents, carers and pupils is the key ingredient. Regular school attendance is essential if pupils are to achieve their full potential. Shepherdswell Academy believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident and competent adults who can realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. If pupils do not attend school regularly, they will not be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Every young person is entitled to an education and absence from school means lost learning. Pupils' absence can sometimes also be a warning sign for a range of safeguarding issues.

Shepherdswell Academy believes that the foundation to secure good attendance is ensuring that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Attendance is an essential foundation for positive outcomes for all pupils and the responsibility of everyone.

Our attendance target for pupils is 97% and we are committed to working proactively to help and support parents/carers and pupils to achieve this.

Most pupils attend well and we will work with families to identify the reasons if attendance is low and try to resolve any difficulties.

2. LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

This Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation. It is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement and is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and SEND.

The school adheres to all relevant legislation, statutory guidance and local guidance from the Milton Keynes Local Authority. This includes:

Statutory Guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation (July 2020)
- Early Years Foundation Stage
- Working together to improve school attendance (May 2022)

Legislation

- The Children Act 1989 and The Children Act 2004
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (and the Prevent Duty guidance)
- The Education Act 2002
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009
- Part 1 of the schedule to the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015.
- The Equality Act (2010)
- The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 (and 2018 amendment)
- The Childcare Act 2006 (all schools with pupils aged under 8)

The school also has regard to relevant non-statutory guidance relating to safeguarding, including:

- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015)
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (2019 and the addendum added April 2020)

This policy links with other school policies and procedures, including:

- Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct policy
- Complaints policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Online Safety policy
- SEND policy
- Equality policy
- Sex and Relationship Education policy
- First Aid policy
- Curriculum policy
- Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children policy
- Privacy notices
- Whistleblowing policy
- Antibullying policy
- IT acceptable use policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing policy

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

We will ensure every child becomes the best they can be. But this means we need parents/carers to work with us to ensure that their child(ren) attend school. Through ensuring children of compulsory school age attend school, in return they will receive full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the local authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents/carers secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present
- absent
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

4. ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

Where pupils at compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

4.1. Procedures for reporting absence

Parents/carers must advise the school by telephone on 01908 735865 on each day of each absence **by 9:05am** providing the reason for the child's absence and an expected date of return. This must be followed up with medical evidence should a child have visited a doctor/dentist etc. This can be in the form of an appointment letter/card/text or a copy of a prescription.

Vulnerable pupils

Vulnerable pupils include, but is not exclusive to, those who are Looked After Children (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or Children in Need (CIN), have specific expectations on monitoring to ensure their continued safety. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the pupil's home, a home visit or by a call to the local authority duty line and/or any other relevant agencies in order that a same-day visit can be made. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) will be treated with similar priority. We will work closely with vulnerable pupils' parents/carers and appropriate agencies to support their learning and ensure their safety.

4.2. Categorising absence

Absence is categorised as follows:

- **Illness:** parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the Headteacher to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.
- **Medical/dental appointments:** parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils must attend school for part of the day. Parents/carers must show the appointment card/text to school.
- **Other authorised circumstances:** this relates to where there is cause for absence due to *exceptional* circumstances, e.g. serious family illness or bereavement.
- **Suspension:** suspension from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. In these circumstances, the school will arrange for work to be sent home.

4.3. Requesting a leave of absence

Parents/carers who need to take their **child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the Headteacher** using the school's Term Time Absence Request Form (See Appendix A).

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. We will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

All requests for term time absence will be responded to in writing outlining whether the request for absence has been granted.

Retrospective requests for a term time absences will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

If a pupil fails to return to school and contact with the parents/carers has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the child will lose their school place.

If the permission to take term time absence is not granted and the parent/carer takes their child out of school the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases, the school may request the local authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

4.4. Religious Observance

We acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognise that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and that this may result in the need for a term-time absence request. Any absence request for religious observance must be in line with DfE guidance relating to absence for religious observance. We may authorise a one day absence per occasion where the day is exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents/carers belong. Parents/carers will be aware of these dates in advance and a Term Time Absence Request Form should be submitted to the school (Appendix A). Any further days taken will be unauthorised. If a term time Absence Request Form is not submitted the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Where necessary, the school will liaise with, and seek advice from, the relevant local religious bodies.

4.5. Late arrival to school (punctuality)

Lateness to school or poor punctuality also negatively impact pupils' learning. If a pupil is late by 5 minutes each day, over an academic year this would amount to three whole days of learning lost, 10 minutes lateness is six and a half days, and 15 minutes is 10 days of lost learning. 10 days is 50 hours and this can seriously impact on a pupil's achievement and ultimately, life chances. Good timekeeping is an important life skill. Poor punctuality not only disrupts your child's learning but the learning of others. It is for these reasons we take punctuality very seriously.

Pupils are expected to arrive on time however, **we encourage all pupils to arrive to school 15 minutes before school begins** so that they are in their classroom ready to learn. Lateness to school is not acceptable.

Registration begins at the following times for our pupils:

- 8.35am for Shepherds Well Academy

Registration is completed by a member of staff and pupils are given a code to show their attendance status (see Appendix B).

The register closes 30 minutes after school begins for all pupils. All pupil absences codes are checked by Shepherdswell Academy and all pupils on site are accounted for by Shepherdswell Academy. If a pupil is absent and no reason has been provided, we will call the parent/carer. This begins at 9:05am.

Pupils who arrive after formal teaching has started will be marked as 'Late' on the registers (coded 'L').

Pupils arriving after the close of register must immediately report to the school office to ensure that they are registered correctly and that staff are aware that the pupil has arrived in school. This will be recorded as an unauthorised half-day absence (coded 'U'). Statutory action, as outlined in section 10, may be taken where appropriate. Lateness will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation and evidence for the late arrival is provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

Due to the importance of punctuality, all pupils who arrive late to school will be issued with a late mark. This is also monitored by our attendance officer.

4.6. Unauthorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents/carers have provided a satisfactory reason and explanation that has been accepted as such by the Headteacher.

Examples of **unsatisfactory** reasons include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniform or any other shopping activities
- Having a hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for training days or other purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Family holidays
- Looking after a family member.

5. ABSENCE PROCEDURES: SCHOOL ACTIONS

If a pupil is marked absent when registration opens and this has not been reported by parents/carers by the expected time (see above), the Attendance Officer will make a telephone call to the parent/carer on the same day to clarify the reasons for the absence and ensure the absence of a pupil is made known to the parent/carer (see appendix E). If contact is not able to be made by phone, contact will be made by text message and followed up with a further phone call. If a pupil is deemed to be vulnerable and we have not had a response then we will make a home visit and inform the relevant agencies as appropriate (Police, Social Care etc).

If a pupil is absent for three or more consecutive days and it has not been possible to make contact with the parent/carer, a home visit will be made on the third day of absence and any subsequent days of absence until contact is made. For vulnerable pupils, daily home visits will be made on the first day of absence and any subsequent days of absence. For any child who is absent without explanation and contact is not able to be made, advice may be sought from the local authority in order that further investigations can be made. Police and/or other relevant external agencies may also be notified where the school has concerns.

If a pupil is absent for five or more consecutive days and contact has been made with the parent/carer, a home visit will be made on the fifth day of absence and at regular intervals of no longer than 5 consecutive days. For children defined as a vulnerable pupil, daily home visits will be made on the first day of absence and any subsequent days of absence. For any child, Police and/or other relevant external agencies may also be notified where the school has concerns.

Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact parents/carers for more information. Where there is a pattern of unauthorised absence, or children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, the school will contact parents/carers to discuss the reasons for this and school systems that could support the family and/or the pupil with their attendance.

Reasons for absence must always be reported by parents/carers. Where a pupil gives a reason for an unauthorised absence, the Attendance Officer will contact the parent/carer to discuss this absence.

A Child Missing in Education (CME) referral will be made by the Attendance Officer where the following criteria applies:

- A pupil has been absent from school for a period of 10 consecutive school days
- The absence was unauthorised
- The school has not been able to contact the parents/carers
- The family do not appear to be living at the home address.

The school will take disciplinary action against any pupils discovered to be truanting. Truancy includes a pupil absconding from lessons and/or absconding from school. In the event of truancy, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school systems that could support the family and child to reduce the risk of further absence.

6. LOW AND PERSISTENT ABSENCE

We monitor pupils' attendance closely and regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels, including the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning.

Percentage Attendance	Number of days absence	Learning hours lost	What happens?
Pupils with attendance 100%	0	0	Maximised chance of success Termly message
Pupils with attendance 99 – 97%	2 to 6 days	10 to 30 hours	Termly message
Pupils with attendance 96 - 94%	7.5 to 11 days	37.5 to 55 hours	Termly message Monitoring – First Letter when attendance reaches below 95%
Pupils with attendance 93 - 91%	13 to 17 days	65 to 85 hours	Termly message Attendance Letters issued
Pupils with attendance below 90%	19 days or more	95 hours or more	Termly message Attendance Letters issued Parent Contracts Potential Fines issued

We report pupils' attendance to parents and carers on a regular basis. Where we have concerns about attendance we will notify parents / carers by letter (see appendix D). In addition, we provide parents and carers with weekly updates by text or email (see appendix F).

6.1. Persistent Absence

A pupil has persistent absence (PA) if attendance falls below 90%. When a pupil misses 10% or more of school this is equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year. We will put additional targeted support in place for pupils who are persistently absent.

6.2. Severe Absence

Severe absence is when attendance falls below 50%. Pupils who are absent from school more than they are present are identified as severely absent pupils.

These pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such, we will provide more intensive, targeted support and an agreed joint approach with parents/carers, local authorities and where necessary, working with additional partners and agencies. All partners will work together, including specific support with attendance, including where relevant a whole family plan, or, for example, possible consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome barriers to a pupil being in school.

We will work with the local authority's School Attendance Support Team to identify, discuss, and agree joint targeted actions for pupils who are persistently or severely absent and those at risk of becoming so. This will include agreeing what support the LA will provide and which (if any) other statutory or voluntary services should become involved.

Parents/carers should do everything possible to encourage all school-age children to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school based, such as difficulty with work, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve the problem.

School refusal/school phobia is a psychological condition that has been medically diagnosed. Other arrangements may be put in place for a child with a genuine school phobia diagnosis and referrals to external agencies will be sought to support the pupil in receiving their education.

7. REMOVAL FROM THE SCHOOL REGISTER

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, pupils can be removed from the school's register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
- Permanent exclusion has occurred, and the correct process has been completed and the local authority have indicated the pupil can be removed from roll.
- Transfer to a new school; the pupil will not be removed from the register until we have received confirmation of their new provision and evidence the pupil has started.
- The pupil is withdrawn by the parent/carer (in writing) to be educated outside the school system.
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after the school has tried to locate the pupil, continuous unauthorised absence and/or the school has not been able to locate the pupil. The school will complete a Child Missing in Education (CME) application to the local authority.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents/carers, pupils, and the wider school community.

8.1. East Midlands Academy Trust will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the trust's ethos and policies.
- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support our schools to prioritise attendance, and work together with school leaders to establish positive, whole-school attendance cultures.
- Work collaboratively with staff in schools, the local advisory boards, local authorities, and other local partners to support schools to maintain high levels of attendance for all pupils.
- Set high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents/carers.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Identify and monitor attendance patterns across our schools to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools.
- Regularly review attendance data at board meetings, including thorough examination of recent and historic trends at a school level as well as benchmarking to comparator schools within the trust, local authority area, region and nationwide.
- Regularly review the Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Ensure training on attendance is included in any trust wide induction packs.
- Ensure training on attendance is included in schools continued professional development offer for all staff.

- Provide opportunities to share effective practice and interventions on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Where appropriate, share staff and other resources between schools in the trust.

8.2. The Trust Board and Local Advisory Board will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Regularly review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Agree school attendance targets and, where appropriate, link these to the performance management of senior leadership within the school.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the local authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader to lead on attendance.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and monitored to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

8.3. The school leadership team will:

- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers to ensure a partnership approach to high attendance is maintained.
- Recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
- Have an effective whole-school culture of high attendance which is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities.
- Have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school.
- Have a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Have a clear process for data analysis, evaluation and monitoring.
- Ensure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents/carers and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels.

- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life, through displays, assemblies, praise and rewards.
- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families.
- Provide regular attendance reports to other relevant leaders and class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils.
- Conduct thorough analyses of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Benchmark attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitor through data, the impact of school wide attendance efforts including any specific strategies implemented and use this information to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the board or governing body.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Return school attendance data to the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Use the standard documents to support a move to legal proceedings should that be necessary.

8.4. The Attendance Officer will:

- Oversea the office monitoring registration on a daily basis.
- Oversea the office receive calls and messages from parents/carers regarding pupil absence.
- Contact parents/carers regarding pupil absence.
- Identify absence trends or concerns and raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers and liaise with relevant members of staff.
- Take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the school, including improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.
- Monitor absence and attendance regularly.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and liaise with the appropriate members of staff.
- Contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified and provide support to improve their child's attendance.
- Support pupils to improve their attendance.
- Work with outside agencies, including the local authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual pupils.
- Provide data to the Headteacher, senior leaders, including those for safeguarding, governors and the trust on a regular basis.

8.5. The Children and Family Welfare Worker will:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality.

- Build strong relationships with families.
- Provide support for pupils and families.
- Provide families with information and signposting to services in the local area.
- Liaise with a range of external services such as housing and Social Care.
- Arrange and attend regular meetings with families.
- Provide reports to the Headteacher, principal, senior leaders, governors and the trust on a regular basis.

8.6. Teachers and Support Staff will:

- Be pro-active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- Endorse a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Treat all pupils and parents/carers with dignity and model respectful relationships to build positive relationships between home and school to help promote good attendance.
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement.
- Ensure that they fully understand and are up to date with the school's Attendance Policy, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue.
- Understand the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances.
- Understand the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers.
- Understand the school/trusts' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.
- Understand the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.
- Ensure that they follow the correct systems for recording attendance and registers are recorded accurately.
- Communicate with parents/carers on a regular basis about attendance.
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed.
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

8.7. Parents and Carers will:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly.
- Communicate effectively with the school to identify reasons for absence and strategies to support improved attendance and punctuality.
- Support their child by working together with the school and any other agencies to address any barriers to attendance.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to become involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.

- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, and in exceptional circumstances, parents/carers will need to complete a Term Time Request for Absence Form prior to the absence.

9. MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Specific measures to monitor attendance must be embedded and regularly checked to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils through specific and tailored interventions. These include:

- Registering pupils accurately and efficiently on Arbor. In the event this system is down, a paper register must be sent to the school Office immediately.
- Setting attendance targets for individual pupils and specific groups, in line with national and Trust expectations.
- Monitoring the attendance of vulnerable groups in relation to local and national figures for all pupils.
- Using Pupil Premium funding to address persistent absence and severe absence of disadvantaged pupils and regularly monitoring the impact of such interventions.
- Ensuring a multi-agency approach is in place for all pupils with severe absence.
- Working collaboratively with Milton Keynes Local Authority.
- Regularly monitoring pupil attendance and punctuality, reporting overall absence, persistent absence rates and severe absence rates for all pupils to the Governing Board and East Midlands Academy Trust (EMAT).
- Persistently monitoring low attending pupils over time to ensure rigorous intervention strategies are provided and demonstrate positive impact.
- Reporting school attendance statistics to parents/carers, local authority and DfE as appropriate.

9.1. Internal Truancy

All pupils are expected to attend lessons as set out on their individual timetables.

If we are unable to locate a pupil

In the event that an absent pupil cannot be located following the checks made by the Attendance Team, a member of the safeguarding team will be notified that the pupil is missing. The safeguarding team will liaise with the parent/carer by telephone to inform them that their child has not attended their class and has not been located in the school. This telephone call is not to alarm the parent/carer, but to identify if there are any reasons for the absence, and to clarify the next steps to ensure the pupil's safety. Where necessary, the Police and/or other agencies will be contacted to support in locating the pupil. When the missing pupil is located, a phone call will be made home to notify the parent or carer by the same member of staff who made the original call, and clarify with the parent/carer, the next steps in response to the pupil's absence.

9.2. Absence and attendance codes

National absence and attendance codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and comply with regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through our school census system. The data helps schools, trusts, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for absence.

Details of the attendance codes can be found in Appendix B and Government guidance (*Working together to improve school attendance*) regarding school attendance can be found by clicking the following link:

[Guidance on attendance codes \(pages 55 – 65\)](#)

9.3 Using Attendance Data

We regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place. We will work collaboratively with parents/carers, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

We monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends to deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This looks at individual pupils, cohorts and groups (including their punctuality) across the school.

Attendance and punctuality analysis is used to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads). Pupils who need support are identified and staff efforts are focused on developing targeted actions for these individuals or groups.

Half-termly, termly, and full year data is analysed and monitored to identify patterns and trends of pupils and cohorts. This data is benchmarked (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.

Specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance or punctuality are identified through data. The impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented, are monitored and the findings are used to evaluate approaches and inform future strategies.

10. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of other issues in a pupil's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents/carers should make the school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils may need more additional support to attain good attendance, for example, some pupils with special educational needs, pupils with physical or mental health needs and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance (see appendix C). These include:

- Discussion with parents/carers and pupils
- Convening attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies – Early Help
- Class Teacher support
- Pupil Voice activities
- Friendship groups
- PSHE support
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Time limited part-time timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages via our Family Support Workers

Each week class attendance will be celebrated in Celebration Assembly the class with the highest attendance that week, will win the Attendance Trophy and an additional reward of 5 minutes extra break time. This is also shared with parents, governors and stakeholders in the weekly SWAY newsletter.

EMAT produce a weekly league table of attendance for all Trust schools, sharing weekly attendance, lates and persistent absences. These review weekly trends across both the Trust and Nationally.

All support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with parents/carers and pupils. Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the school will consider the use of legal sanctions.

11. ATTENDANCE LEGAL INTERVENTION

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with, we will work with the local authority to put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order; issue a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or

has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change parents'/carers' behaviour; intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance); prosecute parents/carers where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent/carer is convicted to secure engagement with support.

Parenting Contracts

A parenting contract is a formal voluntary written agreement between a parent/carer and the school to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision.

The aim from the outset is for the parent/carer(s), the pupil where they are old enough, and the school to work in partnership. The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

It is important to note that while a parenting contract is used as an alternative to prosecution, parents/carers who do not engage with the contract and/or fail to carry out agreed targets identified in the contract may be subject to future prosecution. Furthermore, evidence of failure to engage with the parenting contract can be used as evidence in subsequent prosecution.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where a formal parenting contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) is used as an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. Where there are safeguarding concerns, children's social care services will be involved in the ESO.

ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, rather than Magistrates Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent/carer(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's/carer's duties to secure their child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO.

Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given under the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence and the local authorities may prosecute in the Magistrates Court for persistent non-compliance with the Order and parents/carers (upon conviction) will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000.

Prosecution

Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case.

It is important that parents/carers realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child's attendance at school. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent/carer fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child, the child is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

The school will provide the local authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court.

A parent/carer found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Parenting Orders

Parenting orders are an ancillary order that can be imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and/or community order. Parents' agreement is not required before an order is made. They may be appropriate where the parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance and where compulsion to do so would help change parental behaviour.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A pupil has accrued a number of unauthorised absences following written warnings to improve
- An excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences, which should usually be the parent or parents with day-to-day responsibility for the pupil's attendance.

A Penalty Notice is a fine of £120 if it is paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with the Local Authority.

See the following government guidance for more information: [School attendance and absence: Legal action to enforce school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/school-attendance-and-absence-legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance)

12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The implementation of this policy is carried out by the Executive Headteacher, Ruth Ryan and Head of School, Ellen Williams. Changes will be recommended to Governors and ratified by the Full Local Advisory Board.

The policy is published on the school's website and is shared with parents/carers with any initial information when pupils join the school. Parents/carers are reminded of it at the beginning of each school year and when it is updated.

Appendix A – Term Time Absence Request Form



Together, we learn and grow



Collaboration



Courage



Curiosity



Creativity



Community

Application for Leave of Absence/Medical Appointments/Religious Observance

As a parent/carer you are strongly urged to avoid taking children out of school during term time. If, however, it is unavoidable then you should fill in this form and return it to the school.

By law, only the school can approve absences, not parents/carers. The school need not accept a parental explanation for a child's absence. If the school is satisfied that the circumstances are both genuine and exceptional the absence may be authorised. ***Permission must be applied for a least ten (10) days before the leave of absence is to take place. All medical appointments must be accompanied by an appointment letter, or text shown to the office, before the appointment day/time.*** All requests will be considered separately, considering the child's previous attendance record, the timing of the absence being requested (e.g., time leading up to tests, the number of previous requests). If it is felt that it would be detrimental to your child's educational progress or if it coincides with the Standards Assessment Tests, then leave would not normally be agreed. S.A.T.'s for the year will take place during May - no leave of absence will be authorised.

If permission has been withheld, then any leave taken will be unauthorised. Any unauthorised absence will appear in both the school register and records. Unauthorised absences may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) and the involvement of the LEA or Courts.



Application for Leave of Absence/Medical Appointments/Religious Observance

I request that (Name of Child) Class:

be granted leave of absence from school from:

Date: Time: to Date: Time:

It is necessary to take my child out of school because:

.....

Signed: (parent/carer) Date:

Office Use Only:

Absence: Authorised / Un-authorised / Fine / No Fine

Signed:

Medical Appointment Seen:

Letter / Text

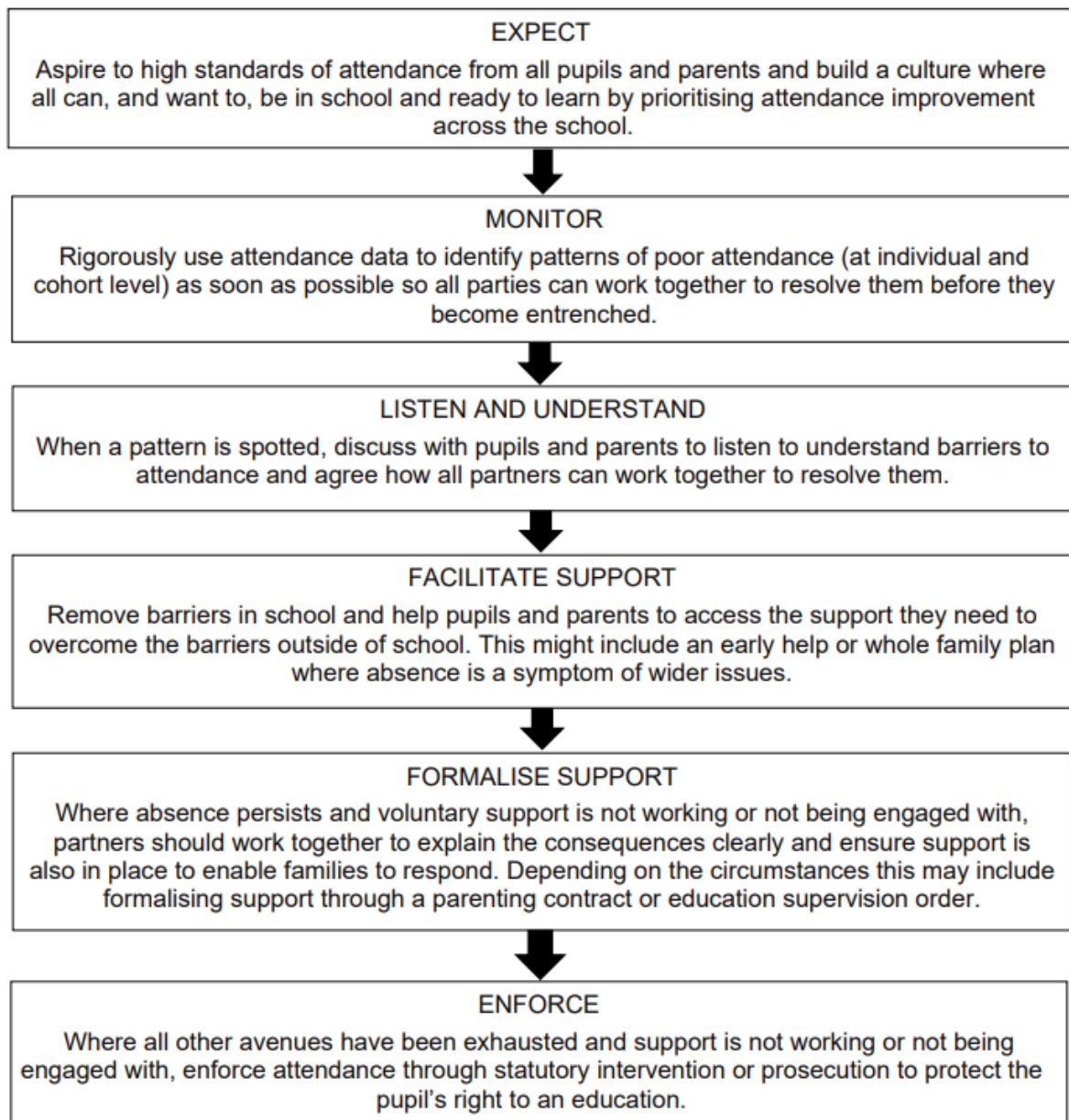
Signed:

Appendix B – Attendance Codes

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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Appendix C – Working Together to Improve Attendance



Working together to improve school attendance (DfE)

Appendix D – Template letters sent to parents/carers



Date: 15/01/2024

Dear

Student:

Class:

As part of our monitoring of attendance, I am writing to inform you that XXXXX's attendance at Shepherdswell Academy is XX% against our school target and national expectation of **95% and above**. While we appreciate that this may have been due to illness, we wanted to bring it to your attention.

Regular attendance in school is a legal requirement and is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. Typically, children whose attendance is lower do not do as well academically which is why we place a high focus on good attendance.

Elsie's attendance will continue to be monitored going forward and I hope you will work with us to support an improvement and work in partnership to raise your child's achievements during this academic year. If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of, please contact us as soon as possible.

If you wish to discuss this with me, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school on 01908 735765.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Kelly Avery

Children and Families Welfare Worker

Appendix E – First Response Procedure

- Attendance staff will be supported each morning by office staff to complete daily attendance first response procedure.
- All staff completing attendance first response procedure will be based in the same office.
- AM registers will close at 9.00am.
- PM registers will close at 12.40pm.
- Check pupils who are absent against the absence line.
- Pupils who are late will sign in at reception and reception staff will amend attendance codes on pupils arrival.
- All staff completing daily first response procedure should suspend all other tasks until first response is complete.
- Attendance contact for pupils attending alternative provision will be made by the attendance team.
- Pupils attending alternative provision will be identified as vulnerable pupils and home visits will be carried out as outlined below.
- All attendance contact should be completed and a list for home visits generated by 10.00am.
- All attendance contact to be added as an attendance comment on Arbor.
- Staff who complete first day contact will record the name of any pupil who requires a home visit, including the date and the number of days of absence.
- 'Vulnerable' pupils are identified on Arbor as user defined groups (Social Care involvement, PP, SEND, LAC, vulnerable).
- Vulnerable lists to be reviewed weekly by the DSL team.
- Any pupil who is open to Social Care or any 'vulnerable' pupil who is absent needs a home visit on day one and any subsequent day regardless if contact has been made.
- Any pupil who is open to Social Care or any 'vulnerable' pupil who is absent where contact has been made needs a home visit on day 1 and any subsequent days of absence.
- DSLs must be informed via My Concern if a home visit is required for any 'vulnerable' pupil, including any pupil open to Social Care.
- The DSL must inform the social worker of any absence for children open to social care.
- The attendance must be made aware of any pupil who has been suspended.
- All actions following home visits must be updated on Arbor and / or My Concern by the Attendance Officer.
- All home visits must be recorded on the home visit spreadsheet (on the same day) by the person who carried out home visits.
- Attendance staff to work with pastoral leads to ensure the accuracy of registers and amend 'N' codes if required.
- On arrival, the cover supervisor will provide supply / temporary staff with a pack which includes information and expectations on completing registers correctly.

No of days absence without contact	Pupils	Vulnerable pupils
Day 1	Phone call home (If no contact is made by phone call, a text sent)	Home visit – daily (If no contact is made for ‘vulnerable pupils’, inform DSL immediately who will contact the relevant agency)
Day 2	Phone call home (If no contact is made by phone call, a text sent)	
Day 3	Home visit – daily until contact is made then as below	

No of days absence with contact	Pupils	Vulnerable pupils
Day 1		Home visit – daily
Day 2		
Day 3		
Day 5	A home visit will be made on the fifth day of absence and at regular intervals of no longer than 5 consecutive days	

Pupil Absence Safeguarding Procedure

Key:

Purple=questions,

Orange= end,

Red = actions,

Blue=statements.



Appendix F: Content of EMAT Attendance emails and text messages

It may be useful for you to know what attendance figures mean for your child:

98% - 100% = Excellent

96% - 97% = Good

95% - below 96% = Satisfactory

91% - 94% = Of concern

Below 90% = Persistent absentee

100%
<p>Termly: Dear Parent/Carer of XXX We are delighted to celebrate that XXX achieved 100% attendance last term. We thank you for your continued support to ensure XXX attends school every day.</p> <p>Weekly: Dear Parent/Carer of XXX We are delighted to celebrate that [NAME] achieved 100% attendance last week. We thank you for your continued support to ensure [NAME] attends school every day.</p>
98% - 100% Excellent
<p>Dear Parent/Carer of XXX Your child's attendance last term was (98-100%), with XX% authorised absence and XX% unauthorised absence. Attendance of over 98% is considered excellent attendance, so very well done – keep it up!</p>
96% - 97% Good
<p>Dear Parent/Carer of XXX Your child's attendance last term was (96-97%), with XX% authorised absence and XX% unauthorised absence. Attendance of 96-97% is considered good attendance, so very well done – keep it up!</p>
95% - below 96% Satisfactory
<p>Dear Parent/Carer of XXX Your child's attendance last term was XX%, with XX% authorised absence and XX% unauthorised absence. Attendance between 95% and below 96% is considered satisfactory attendance. Please ensure [NAME] attends school every day.</p>
91% - 94% Of concern Messages will be sent termly and weekly
<p>Termly: Dear Parent/Carer of XXX Your child's attendance last term was XX%, with XX% authorised absence and XX% unauthorised absence. Attendance between 91%-94% is considered to be low and of concern. Please ensure [NAME] attends school every day. If there is anything we can help with to improve your child's attendance, please contact the school office.</p> <p>Weekly: Dear Parent/Carer of XXX Your child's attendance this term so far is XX%, with XX% authorised absence and XX% unauthorised absence.</p>

Attendance between 91%-94% is considered to be low and of concern. Please ensure [NAME] attends school every day. If there is anything we can help with to improve your child's attendance, please contact the school office.

Below 90%

Messages will be sent termly and weekly

Termly:

Dear Parent/Carer of XXX

Your child's attendance last term was XX%, with XX% authorised absence and XX% unauthorised absence.

Attendance below 90% means your child is persistently absent and this is of concern.

Please ensure [NAME] attends school every day. We will contact you to agree how we can work together to improve your child's attendance.

Weekly:

Dear Parent/Carer of XXX

Your child's attendance this term so far is XX%, with XX% authorised absence and XX% unauthorised absence.

Attendance below 90% means your child is persistently absent and this is of concern. Please ensure [NAME] attends school every day. We will contact you to agree how we can work together to improve your child's attendance.