part of the

LDBS Academies Trust
LAT and LAT 2

Attendance Policy

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On behalf of the Trust Board of Directors			
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NOTE TO THE LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEES – MAY BE DELETED UPON LAC ADOPTION

This is the Trust-wide Attendance policy template. A space is foreseen above for the school to add its own logo and name. A box below is foreseen for the school to add its school-specific Values. Annex 2 should be completed by the school with the school-specific information. Please do not change the policy formatting as the Policy contains style-based cross-references. This document sets minimum compliance requirements for all LDBS Academies Trust (LAT and LAT 2) schools. Each Local Academy Committee (LAC) is requested to: (i) Approve this template (with Annex 2 - School-specific details) completed. (ii) Ensure local implementation complies with this template.

Version control update log: New statutory Trust Policy in line with statutory requirements.

PLEASE UPDATE THE TABLE OF CONTENTS AFTER REMOVAL OF THIS SECTION (Go stand on the table of contents and you will see an “update this table” button on the top right)!

TRUST VISION STATEMENT

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches." (Matthew 13: 31-32)

In the parable of The Mustard Seed, Jesus reminds us that even the smallest of seeds has the potential to grow into the fullness of itself. We aim to provide the right environment for our children, and all whom we serve, to flourish into the fullness of themselves. He tells us these seeds grow into trees, capable of providing a home for a rich diversity of life, our work is to ensure all in our communities grow into people of compassion and wisdom with a deep spiritual understanding of how to support the needs of others.

SCHOOL VALUES

As members of a calm and stable learning environment, everyone will experience equal opportunities for growth and exploration and the gift of supportive, caring **FRIENDSHIPS** within which the seeds of R**ESILIENCE** are planted and watered. Our **HOPE** is that all can blossom and flourish continuing to grow into the people they have been created to be.

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1 Aims

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

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- 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 and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance and School attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

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

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Local Academy Committee

The Local Academy Committee is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority

    - 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

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and, where relevant, authorising the deputy headteacher 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'Senior Attendance Champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- 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

3.4 The name and contact information for the designated senior leader is listed in **Annex 1– Attendance codes**

3.5 **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

Annex 2.

3.6 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is 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 to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher, or deputy headteacher if authorised by the headteacher, when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The name and contact details of the attendance officer can be found in **Annex 1– Attendance codes**

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
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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)
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Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
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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
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G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
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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

Annex 2.

3.7 Class teachers

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

3.8 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer messages, and where relevant / possible, calls from parents/carers to the teacher (or, as required, the headteacher) to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.9 Parents

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

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

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before the start of the school day on the day of the absence, and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child. If the child is in the Early Years Foundation Stage, provide more than 2 emergency contact numbers, where possible.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- If the school or the local authority uses attendance contracts: 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 the designated senior leader responsible for attendance (see

- Annex 2)

3.10 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day, on time.

4 Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

The school keeps an electronic attendance register and places all pupils on this register.

The school takes an 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 Annex 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

The exact starting and ending time of the school's school day, and by which time pupils must arrive on each school day, can be found in

Annex 2.

The register for the first session will be taken at the start of the session and will be kept open until maximum 30 minutes after the start of the session. The afternoon register will be taken at the start of the first session after the lunch break and will be kept open until maximum minutes after the start of the session.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence before the start of the school day, by calling the school office. The school telephone number and email address are listed in

Annex 2, along with the school's pupil absence notification procedures.

Absence due to physical or mental illness is 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. The school 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.

Parents are urged to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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.

Details of how parents should request a leave of absence for their child can be found in

Annex 2.

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

Add details of how your school identifies and responds to ongoing punctuality issues.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact other known contacts, or, if the child cannot be located or there is any other concern for the pupil's welfare, the police.
- 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, and 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

The school will offer support to the pupil's parents to improve attendance whenever appropriate, and will work as quickly as possible to identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners. The school will make the necessary referrals as soon as possible.

Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, the school may issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or initiate other legal interventions (see section 7 below).

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly (at least once a term) inform parents (see definition in section 3.9) about their child's attendance and absence levels.

5 Authorised absence

5.1 Approval of 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
- Exceptional circumstances: rare and unexpected circumstances which are unlikely to reoccur, such as: medical emergencies, family emergencies (e.g. death of a parent or grandparent).

A leave of absence can only be granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The school assesses each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Leave of absence will not be granted for:

- a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.
- the purposes of a family holiday.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and at least 3 weeks before the absence, using the leave of absence application form in Annex 3. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request. The school's will strictly adhere to its safeguarding and data protection policies when handling these applications.

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
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling as part 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.

The school celebrates good attendance, amongst other in assemblies or on displays.

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

The school and/or the local authority may 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/or attendance contracts have been unsuccessful, the school 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:

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

A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered, if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis

- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

7.4 Penalty notices

The headteacher (or deputy headteacher, if authorised by the headteacher), local authority or the police 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 school issues a penalty notice, we will check with the local authority before doing so, and send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued.

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

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

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

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

- If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.
- If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

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

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

8 Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

The school's approach to supporting pupils who are absent from, or returning to school, will be graduated, relational and safeguarding-led. The school will set clear expectations, aim to provide help early, and invoke multi-agency support as and when required. The school is particularly aware of the categories of pupils:

8.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

These are pupils whose absence arises from multiple or entrenched factors (e.g. family stress, poverty, unmet SEND, social care involvement, anxiety, previous exclusions or trauma).

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

The school's approach will consist of:

- Early identification and listening: Use regular monitoring to spot emerging patterns (e.g. rising broken weeks, frequent lateness) and convene a meeting with parents and the pupil to understand the story behind the absence, not just the attendance data.
- Relational, non-punitive conversations: Train staff to lead sensitive discussions that explore pupil voice, family circumstances and perceived barriers, avoiding blame and using restorative/relational approaches.
- Personalised attendance plan: Create a written plan that sets out shared goals, reasonable adjustments in school (curriculum, environment, key adult, break-out space), agreed family actions, and support from external agencies.
- Tiered, multi-agency support: Escalate from universal offers to targeted and intensive support, drawing on pastoral support, ELSA/mentoring, social care, early help, youth services, educational psychology or family support workers, as needed.
- Clear boundaries and escalation: The school communicates clearly about when plans will be reviewed, how lack of engagement or improvement will be handled, and when formal interventions (such as legal sanctions) may be considered after supportive routes are exhausted.

8.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health

These pupils may be too unwell to attend full-time or experience fluctuating capacity to attend. Attendance will be managed alongside statutory duties around medical needs and equality. The school's approach will be based on:

- Holistic assessment and evidence: Where absence is frequent or prolonged, seek appropriate medical information (e.g. GP/consultant/mental health professional) to understand functional

impact on attendance, while avoiding unnecessary requests for evidence for routine, short-term illness.

- Individual healthcare and attendance planning: Ensure a pupil with long-term or serious physical or mental health needs has an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) in which attendance expectations, reasonable adjustments and reintegration steps are explicitly built in.
- Reasonable adjustments and flexible provision: Adapt the timetable, environment and support (quiet spaces, phased starts, reduced sensory load, safe person, remote learning as appropriate) so that education remains as full-time as the pupil's health allows.
- Coordinated multi-agency working: Work closely with health services, mental health teams, local authority inclusion/attendance services and, where relevant, SEND teams to align clinical recommendations, on-site support and any alternative provision.
- Clear review and reintegration: Use documented, time-bound reintegration plans following significant absence (e.g. graded return, reviewed fortnightly) to prevent drift into long-term part-time timetables or elective home education by default.

8.3 Pupils absent due to other barriers to attendance

The following circumstances are known to put pupils at higher risk of persistent or severe absence:

- Having SEND
- Being disadvantaged
- Being known (or previously known) to children's social care
- Having other barriers to attendance (e.g. young carers)

In these cases school will adopt a proactive, targeted and sustained support, rather than a purely compliance-based response.

8.3.1 Having SEND

Pupils with SEND are statistically more likely to be persistently absent and may experience attendance difficulties linked to sensory needs, communication differences, anxiety, learning difficulties or unmet support needs. The school's approach will consist of:

- Early identification and reasonable adjustments: Ensure swift assessment of emerging needs, adapt the curriculum and environment (e.g. reduced sensory overload, visual schedules, key adult, safe space) and record adjustments in SEN support plans or EHCPs so that getting into school is realistically achievable.
- Attendance woven into SEND planning: Include attendance targets, triggers for review and reintegration steps within SEN reviews, using joint meetings (SENDCO, attendance lead, parents, pupil) to align provision, transport, therapies and any part-time timetable within statutory expectations

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

8.3.2 Being disadvantaged

Disadvantaged pupils (e.g. eligible for pupil premium) are more likely to have higher absence, often linked to housing insecurity, financial hardship, caring pressures, digital exclusion or reduced engagement. The school's approach will be based on:

- Targeted use of resources: Use pupil premium and other funds to remove practical barriers (e.g. uniform, transport, breakfast clubs, devices), provide pastoral and academic support, and ensure disadvantaged pupils can access enrichment that builds belonging.
- Data-led, relational outreach: Monitor attendance of disadvantaged cohorts closely, prioritise them for early contact and home visits, and use trusted staff/mentors to sustain regular dialogue with families about routines, expectations and support offers.

8.3.3 Known to children's social care

Pupils with a social worker, in need, on a child protection plan or in care are recognised nationally as at particularly high risk of absence and harm; daily attendance is a key safeguarding factor. The school's approach will be based on:

- Attendance as safeguarding: Treat unexplained or deteriorating attendance for these pupils as a safeguarding concern, sharing information promptly with social workers, virtual school heads and other partners in line with local protocols.
- Joint planning and oversight: Build attendance expectations and support into Child in Need / Child Protection / PEP / CiC reviews, agree who will follow up first-day absence, and ensure contingency plans for transport, placement moves or contact arrangements that might affect attendance.

8.3.4 Other barriers (e.g. young carers)

National data suggest primary-age young carers are under-identified, but significantly affected in terms of attendance (and wellbeing). Pupils who are young carers or have similar responsibilities can struggle with fatigue, anxiety about family members, and clashes between caring routines and school hours, leading to regular lateness or absence. The school's approach is based on:

- Identification and trusted relationships: Include clear processes for identifying young carers (admissions questions, staff training, self-referral), ensure they have a named key adult, and seek consent to share status with relevant staff sensitively.
- Flexible, protective support: Making of reasonable timetable and homework adjustments (e.g. flexible start/finish, space to rest, chances to phone home, extended deadlines), link into young carer services, and monitor attendance closely so support can be stepped up before absence escalates

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

The school's will plan each reintegration in partnership with families and the pupil, adjusting their approach with parents who may not speak English fluently and may be unfamiliar with the English school system. The approach will, whenever relevant / possible, comprise of:

- Planning and communication before return: For any absence of around 15 school days or more (continuous or cumulative), schools will:
    - Make or update an Individual Healthcare Plan and/or reintegration plan where health has been a factor, co-produced with parents, the pupil and relevant professionals (using interpreters or bilingual staff where needed to ensure parents fully contribute).

    - Provide clear, simple written and verbal information about the planned return (times, routines, key adults, expectations) and how progress will be reviewed in accessible formats, where necessary in the family's home language or with translated summaries
- Gradual, personalised return
    - Full-time attendance remains the goal, but schools may use a short, time-limited phased return to rebuild stamina and confidence, with review dates agreed in advance and explained carefully to parents, checking understanding, not just consent.
    - Reasonable adjustments (e.g. safe space, flexible entry, adapted curriculum, reduced sensory load, mentoring) will be recorded on the reintegration/SEND/EHCP plan and explained (where relevant taking into account potential cultural barriers to understanding).
- Curriculum, peer and pastoral support
    - Schools will assess gaps in learning and provide proportionate catch-up (incl. EAL support if required) so pupils can access learning from day one without being overwhelmed.
    - Staff will actively support friendships and belonging (e.g. carefully chosen buddies, structured group activities supported social times), to reduce anxiety about returning.
- Safeguarding and multi-agency coordination
    - Prolonged or repeated absence will be treated as a safeguarding indicator, with schools liaising as appropriate with the local authority, health, social care and community organisations.
    - Where hospital education, tuition or alternative provision has been involved, the home school will participate in handover meetings to align provision and plan a smooth return.
- Monitoring, review and escalation
    - Reintegration plans will include review dates, attendance goals and agreed signs that support can be stepped up or stepped down. Reviews need to be arranged in such a way that parent engagement is maximised.
    - If attendance does not improve despite support, schools will follow the Trust's escalation pathway, while maintaining a focus on understanding barriers rather than defaulting to sanctions.

8.5 Prolonged absence in EYFS (Nursery and Reception) provision

In cases of prolonged absence, or when a child is absent without notification, the school will attempt to contact the child's parents and alternative emergency contacts.

When deciding whether a child's absence should be considered prolonged, we will consider the:

- Patterns and trends in the child's absences and their personal circumstances
- Vulnerability of the child and their parents, as well as the circumstances of their home life

When dealing with prolonged absences in EYFS, schools adopt an approach that emphasises attachment, routines and family relationships. The approach will be based on, whenever relevant / possible:

- Relational, attachment-aware return: EYFS settings will prioritise the key person relationship. A pre-return contact will be organised (e.g. phone call or short video from the key person) and, where possible/needed, a brief visit or stay-and-play to re-establish trust and familiarity.
- Visual supports (photos of staff/areas, simple social stories) will be used to prepare the child for what will happen when they come back, including any changes to the environment or routines.

- Settling-in and phased attendance: after a prolonged absence, the school will treat the return much like a new settling-in period, involving shorter initial sessions, with a parent/carer present where appropriate, gradually increasing time in the setting as the child shows readiness.
- Close observation of the child's emotional wellbeing, behaviour and play, adjusting pace and support so separation distress is contained and responded to, not escalated.
- Partnership with parents and carers: The school will ensure it is aware of any family changes that may have occurred during the absence, to ensure consistent messages and predictable routines between home and school. The school will ensure there is two-way communication with parents daily about sleep, eating, toileting, health.
- School staff will share clear, simple guidance with parents on rebuilding attendance habits (morning routines, goodbye rituals, arriving on time), and to signpost them to early help or health services if wider needs are identified.
- Safeguarding and tracking in EYFS: The school will follow up prolonged absence and maintain multiple emergency contacts. Unexplained or repeated prolonged absence will trigger safeguarding checks in line with Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

As EYFS is a particularly vulnerable cohort, the school reviews the EYFS attendance data regularly. School leaders are responsible for ensuring that children who have had prolonged absences are receiving appropriate support and remain on roll unless a managed move or other lawful process is agreed.

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.

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 Trust, local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement. The data will also be shared with the school's Local Academy Committee and Trust Board of Directors.

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 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to [class teachers/form tutors], to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

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, Trust 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

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE and/or local authority is updated, and as a minimum annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Board of Directors of the Trust and the school's Local Academy Committee.

11 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

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

[Insert school name and logo here]

Annex 1– 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
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

[Insert school name and logo here]

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

[Insert school name and logo here]

		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

[Insert school name and logo here]

Annex 2 - Key School Information

Role	Name	Contact information (tel. no. and/or email address)
Headteacher	L Desouza	Headteacher@meridianangel.com
Senior Attendance Champion	L Desouza	Headteacher@meridianangel.com
Attendance Officer	S Wint	Office@meridianangel.com

The school day starts at 8.50 and ends at 3.20.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45 on each school day.

School Contact information for the reporting of absences:

- Tel: 02037733895
- Email: Office@meridianangel.com

Description of the school's absence notification procedure:

- Unplanned absences: Notification before the start of the school day. Need to be called every day of the absence.
- Medical appointments: Add details of how parents should request leaves of absence.

[Insert school name and logo here]

Annex 3

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM-TIME

(This form consists of 5 pages – ALL pages to be submitted to parents and included in response(s)).

Dear Applicant,

All schools **by law** must follow the Department for Education's statutory guidance relating to school attendance. They must use the appropriate national attendance or absence code, and follow the criteria set out within the guidance. The statutory guidance states:

- A leave of absence **must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances and must be requested in advance**
- A leave of absence must be requested **in advance** by a parent who the pupil normally lives with
- Schools must judge **each application individually**, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request
- Where a leave of absence is granted, **the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school**
- **A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance**
- A school **cannot** grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, the leave of absence should not be granted
- Where this guidance refers to a parent, the school and/or local authority will need to decide which adult(s) is most appropriate. Generally, parents include:
    - All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
    - All those who have parental responsibility
    - Those who have day to day responsibility for the child

Please note all schools are expected to regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to their educational progress. If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken, schools may refer to the Local Authority for legal action. Please find attached information regarding Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance.

[Insert school name and logo here]

Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

From 19 August 2024, there is a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines being issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools

National Threshold
A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by ALL schools in England, this is: • 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period • These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence • For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold • The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years

Who may be fined?
• Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school • For example, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines

First Offence
The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be: • £80 per parent, per child if paid **within 21 days** • If **not paid within 21 days**, the fine will increase to **£160 per parent, per child**, payable between the 22nd and 28th day

Second Offence (within 3 years)
The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be: • £160 per parent, per child – payable within 28 days

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)
The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice WILL NOT be issued, and the case will be presented **straight to the Magistrate's Court** • **Prosecution** can result in **criminal records** and **fines of up to £2,500** • Cases found **guilty** in a **Magistrates Court** can show on the parent's future DBS certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a **'failure to safeguard a child's education'**

[Insert school name and logo here]

Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time

Dear Headteacher,

I would like to request permission for leave of absence for my child, a pupil registered at your school for the reasons detailed below *(further information can be attached if required):*

Pupil's full name	
Pupil's Date of Birth	
Year Group	
Class / Registration	
Pupil's full address and postcode	

First date of absence	
Last date of absence	
Date of return to school	
Number of school days absent	

Reason for request including why you believe your circumstances to be exceptional (Further details may be attached to this form)

LDBS Academies Trust

[Insert school name and logo here]

If you have a child/ren at another school/s, please detail their name/s and which school/s they attend below
Pupil's name, name of school and school telephone number:

Full name of person making request (note requests must be made by a parent who the pupil normally lives with)	
Relationship to child	
Full address and postcode (if different from child's above)	
Please tick this box to confirm that you have read the school's attendance policy and the information regarding penalty notices above	☐
Signature	
Date	

[Insert school name and logo here]

Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time

School Response

The school will complete the below, keeping the originals, returning copies of all pages to all parents

Full name parent:	
Copy sent to (Sent to other parent):	

Date application received:		**Date response school:**	

Pupil's full name			
Confirmation of the pupil's details in application form:			☐
Pupil's percentage attendance year to date:			
Number of sessions absent this academic year (total):			
Number authorised:		**Number unauthorised:**	

If unauthorised absences recorded, was a Penalty Notice Fine requested?	
Knowledge of <u>any</u> previous Penalty Notice Fines issued to parent(s)?	

School response to parent/s request for leave of absence

Number of sessions authorised		**Pupil's expected return date:**	
Please note that any number of sessions absent above those explicitly authorised are unauthorised.			

Headteacher Signature	
Headteacher Name	
Date	