



Swalecliffe Community Primary School

## Attendance Policy

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## Contents

Legislation and Guidance .....	4
Aims.....	4
Expectations.....	5
Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
The Governing Body .....	5
The Executive Headteacher and Head of School .....	5
The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance (Attendance Champion) .....	6
The Attendance Officer.....	6
Class Teachers.....	6
School Office Staff.....	6
Parents/Carers .....	7
Children.....	7
Strategies for Promoting Attendance.....	7
Monitoring .....	7
Day to Day Attendance Monitoring.....	7
Monitoring Attendance .....	8
Analysing Attendance .....	8
Using Data to Improve Attendance .....	8
Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence.....	8
Persistent Absenteeism.....	8
Recording Attendance.....	9
Attendance Register.....	9
Unplanned Absence.....	9
Planned Absence.....	9
Lateness and Punctuality .....	10
Following Up Unexplained Absences.....	10
Reporting to Parents / Carers.....	10
Authorised and Unauthorised Absence .....	10
Exceptional Circumstances .....	10
Analysis of Attendance Data.....	11
Collaboration .....	11
Support.....	11
Intensive Support.....	12
Enforcement.....	12
Attendance Contracts.....	13
Education Supervision Orders.....	13
Prosecution.....	13

Parenting Orders .....	13
Penalty Notices .....	13
Legal Sanctions .....	14
Children Missing in Education.....	14
Appendix 1: Attendance Codes.....	15
Appendix 2: Attendance Groups .....	18
Appendix 3: Kent School Referral Pathway .....	19

## Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016, 2024 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

[School census guidance](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## Aims

The causes of absence from school are complex and to successfully treat them and remove barriers to children attending school at home or at school means that schools need to work in partnership with families. We follow statutory guidance to work collaboratively with children and their families using six points at the core of our Attendance Policy.

### 1. Expectations

Whilst it is a legal requirement for parents/ carers to ensure their child attends school full-time, at Swalecliffe, we believe that attendance is everyone's responsibility and we build a culture to encourage children to feel that they belong to our school community so that they will want to be in our school and ready to learn, every day. We hold high expectations for attendance and actively promote 100% attendance for all children by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

### 2. Monitoring

We use attendance data to monitor the attendance of all our children, identifying groups or individuals who have high levels of absence, so that we can work collaboratively with families to address the issues before they become ingrained. We also compare our data with other schools on a local, county and national basis, so that we can identify any similar patterns of poor attendance.

### 3. Collaboration

When a child's attendance is identified as a concern, we engage with children and parents and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance. We will then put together an action plan to remove these barriers so that we can work with families to resolve the issues and get the child back into school as soon as possible with improved and sustained attendance.

### 4. Support

We signpost families to access support to resolve barriers outside school. This may include outside agencies such as Early Help. Simultaneously, we will work with children to remove the barriers within school, and continue to monitor to ensure the child's improved attendance is sustained and has a long-lasting impact on their learning outcomes.

### 5. Intensive Support

Should poor attendance continue or voluntary support is rejected, we will ensure that families are aware of the consequences of continued absence and work with partners to offer support to enable families to engage with us and work to resolve the attendance issues.

## 6. Enforcement

If support is required and all other efforts have failed to engage the family and improve the child's attendance, the school will enforce attendance through statutory intervention. This will be a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution in order to protect the child's right to an education.

## Expectations

We believe that good attendance is the essential foundation for all children to achieve their full potential and have positive academic outcomes. In addition, research has shown that a good attendance record has a positive effect on a child's wellbeing and safeguarding. Consequently, as part of our ethos, we have developed a school culture that promotes good attendance where all staff believe that attendance is everyone's responsibility at Swalecliffe. We consistently promote the benefits of good attendance at school and strive to make children feel that they are part of our school community, so that Swalecliffe is a place where they want to be.

- We believe that good attendance is a learned behaviour and therefore we stress to children, families and staff the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset of a child's education.
- Our Attendance Champions set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance and have established effective systems for tackling absence and ensuring they are followed by all staff. New research and understanding are recurrently considered and the efficacy of the school's policy, strategies and processes are continually assessed and adapted.
- We set high expectations for every child and communicate these expectations clearly and consistently to children and their families.
- We visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance through displays, assemblies and motivational activities.
- We monitor attendance data to identify patterns, and reward and praise all improved efforts as well as children achieving 100% attendance.
- We build strong relationships and collaborate with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working together to remove them.
- We have a clear attendance policy which is understood by all staff, children and parents.
- We accurately complete attendance registers and have an effective day to day process in place to follow-up absence and identify children or cohorts who need support and put effective research-based strategies in place.
- We reward children for good or significantly improved attendance with certificates and various other methods.
- We are mindful that some children are absent due to special education needs and/or mental or physical ill health, and offer them additional support.
- We understand the safeguarding concerns surrounding children missing in education and are mindful of the issues that these children can face.

## Roles and Responsibilities

At Swalecliffe, there is a whole school, staff responsibility and approach for monitoring & improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

### The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the Executive Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### The Executive Headteacher and Head of School

The EHT and HoS are responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual children.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Where and when necessary, liaising with the LA to ensure penalty notices are issued.

## The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance (Attendance Champion)

The Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families.
- Ensuring that staff members are carrying out home visits when necessary.

The Attendance Champion (designated senior leader) responsible for attendance is **Mrs S Watson (Miss K Roy in her absence)**

## The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Updating the electronic register with the appropriate absence code, considering the messages received.
- Preparing a daily absence report for the Senior Management Team and Designated Safeguarding Leads, detailing all child absences and recommending potential home visits.
- Sharing weekly the whole school attendance, class attendance, and top classes for praise during assembly.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see below).
- 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 Executive Headteacher.
- Working with Kent PRU & Attendance Service (KPAS) Attendance Officers to tackle persistent absence. Advising the Executive Headteacher and Head of School when to issue fixed-penalty notices.
- Supporting the Head of School in the attendance meetings.

The attendance officer is **Mrs Carter** who can be contacted on 01227 272101 or via [office@swalecliffe.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@swalecliffe.kent.sch.uk)

## Class Teachers

- Class teachers must record daily attendance on the Electronic Register, using the correct code for present and 'N' for absent (including late). All children should be sitting in their classes by 8:50am, or they will be marked late.
- Class teachers will also make calls home if a child is persistently absent to explain about the learning lost.
- Prompt/encourage good attendance and may organise a weekly class treat for any week with 100% attendance.

## School Office Staff

School office staff will:

- Record on the Electronic Register any call or email received to the main school telephone, regarding a child's/children's absence on a day to day basis. Emails received to the main school account will be forwarded to the dedicated email box for the Attendance Officer to action.
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Liaise with the Wellbeing Team and Attendance Officer regarding absence.

## Parents/Carers

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts children at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

Parents are expected to:

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence (and where appropriate each subsequent day of absence), provide a valid reason and advise when they are expected to return.
- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Provide medical evidence when requested by the Attendance Officer.

**Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.**

## Children

Children are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time - they should be in class and sitting ready for the morning register at 8.50am.
- Engage in their learning.

## Absence Procedures

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us via telephone or email on each day of absence before 8.30am.
- Or call into the school office and report to reception.

## Strategies for Promoting Attendance

### Swalecliffe:

- Classes with highest attendance – celebrated in weekly email.
- Certificates for children who have made special efforts to attend school or have shown improved attendance.

## Monitoring

Our whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities. This Attendance Policy aims to clearly explain these expectations, detail the procedures that we follow and identify the various responsibilities.

### Day to Day Attendance Monitoring

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. However, unless there are exceptional circumstances, the absence will be marked as unauthorised if you do not contact the school.
- Request medical evidence if we feel it necessary.
- Request medical evidence for every absence if the attendance drops over a period of time, or if there is any doubt about the legitimacy of the absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer, if absences persist or non-engagement.
- Refer the matter to the School Liaison Officer if all other strategies have been used and court proceedings is the next step.

## Monitoring Attendance

We will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual child's level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Child-level absence 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 compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## Analysing Attendance

We will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify children or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these children and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

## Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

Provide regular attendance reports to class teacher and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with children and families.

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

## Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a child misses 50% or more of school.

The schools will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of children who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Utilise home visits on days of absence if we feel it necessary.

## Persistent Absenteeism

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly.

Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately. PA children are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

All our PA children and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include:

- Allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, Family Liaison Officer, Well Being Manager, Pastoral Support or School Liaison Officer.
- If a child's attendance drops to 90%, their attendance will be monitored on a weekly basis and a Medical Evidence letter may be sent from the Attendance Officer. This letter will state that medical evidence will be required for all periods of absence.

If medical evidence is not provided, a penalty warning letter may be actioned. A penalty fine will follow if the parent(s)

continues to not provide medical evidence. Once a child's attendance drops to 80% or below, the parent(s) will be invited to a meeting with the Attendance Officer and a member of SLT to discuss the matter and find a way to resolve the issue.

Failure to attend the meeting or continued absence, will result in a referral to the School Liaison Officer or a Penalty Notice raised.

## Recording Attendance

### Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all children onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every child is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
  - > The original entry
  - > The amended entry
  - > The reason for the amendment
  - > The date on which the amendment was made
  - > The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Gates close at 8.45am, children must be in their classes EVERY school day by 8.50am.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until **9.00am** at the very latest. The register for the second session will be taken at **12.55pm**.

### Unplanned Absence

The child's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school on 01227 272101 or via email on [office@swalecliffe.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@swalecliffe.kent.sch.uk)

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the child's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

### Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the child's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and is able to provide evidence.

Please email medical evidence into the school office at [office@swalecliffe.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@swalecliffe.kent.sch.uk), or show a copy of the letter to reception.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. The child's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

## Lateness and Punctuality

- From 08.50am and 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. Both school gates close at 8.45am.
- If you arrive at school after that time, you and your child must go to the School Office.
- Please note that being late even if for a few minutes each day will add up to a lot of lost learning over time and often interventions to help your child catch up are scheduled at the beginning of the school day.
- If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer and/or Head of School to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

## Following Up Unexplained Absences

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

- Contact the child's parent / carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- This could be a home visit by school staff (as per new legislation July 2022).
- If nobody is at home we would leave a "Calling Card" to ask the parents / carers to contact the school. (If there is still no contact that day, we will try to reach any of the child's emergency contacts. We do reserve the right to contact the LA and/or the police to take further advice in case of emergency).
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not, identify the correct attendance code to use, and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Where necessary, contact the parent / carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the School Liaison Officer.

## Reporting to Parents / Carers

- The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels during parental consultation evenings and the annual written report.
- Give parents / carers details on attendance in our newsletters.
- Publish school % attendance figure poster.
- Contact parents / carers should their child's attendance become a cause for concern.

## Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

### Approval for term-time absence

The School can grant a leave of absence when a child needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave, for public examinations
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the child is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the child normally lives with and the school agree the child should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the children will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.

## Exceptional Circumstances

During term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances', a school may authorise a leave of absence. A leave of absence is granted at the Head of School's discretion, including the length of time the child is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as follows:

- Bereavement of a close family member (the funeral only)
- Visiting a family member who is seriously ill

- Religious Observance (travel and ceremony only)
- Parents/Carers who are Service Personnel and have been away for a long operation time
- Any reasonable adjustments for children with special educational needs or disabilities
- Families who are recovering from trauma or crisis.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least three weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The Head of School may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Leave for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance for the funeral service only, not extended leave.
- Leave to visit family members are also not normally granted during term-time. Children may, however, need time to visit seriously ill relatives.
- Leave which takes the needs of the families of service personnel into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
- Leave which makes reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Leave for families who may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.

## Analysis of Attendance Data

In order to initialise crucial early intervention, regular data analysis enables the school to provide additional support to children or cohorts that need it. In additional, historic and emerging patterns across the whole school allow the development of strategies to overcome poor attendance.

At Swalecliffe, we will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to children and families.
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers.
- Undertake frequent individual level analyses to identify specific children needing support.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Benchmark our attendance data against local, regional and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address poor attendance through data (Disadvantaged Children, SEND).
- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance strategies to evaluate approaches and inform future strategies.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the governing body.
- Include cohorts of children based on our context (PP, SEND, LAC, EHCP).

## Collaboration

We believe that building strong relationships with children and families supports good attendance and creates a sense of belonging.

We strive to treat all children and parents/carers with dignity and maintain that all staff should model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school.

We ensure children and parents are made aware of the links between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing, and challenge any misconceptions of what good attendance looks like.

We share class and school attendance data with pupils and families through our website and Newsletter.

## Support

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes problematic, we draw on our relationships with families to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the child or family is experiencing. We will deal with these

sensitively and as a place of safety and support, Swalecliffe Primary School will work to support families and only employ punitive approaches as a last resort.

- We believe that supportive approaches are most effective when they are put into place as early as possible. Therefore, we will endeavour to schedule meetings as soon as possible.
- We meet with children and parents who are at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. These actions should be regularly discussed and reviewed together with children and families.
- Where support with attendance is needed, we are able to offer children and families a consistent contact in school, to work alongside the family and facilitate support from within the school or through engagement with outside agencies.
- If the needs and barriers are individual to the child, we will provide mentoring, alternative provision or if appropriate, an educational health care plan.
- We will continue to monitor the impact of any intervention and adapt where necessary in discussion with children, families and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family.
- Where children have been absent for a lengthy period of time, we will provide support to build confidence, bridge gaps and manage their reintegration into the classroom and school.

Some children face more complex barriers to attendance. These can include children who have long term mental or physical health conditions or who have special education needs.

- All children have a right to an education, so the ambition for attendance at Swalecliffe is the same for every child, but additional support may be needed to facilitate this.
- We will strive to understand the individual needs of the child and family, and work in partnership to put in-school support in place and work with outside agencies where external support is needed.
- We will facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the underlying health issue.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to meet the needs of children who are struggling to attend school. Any adjustments should be agreed by and reviewed with the child and family.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these children face including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Make use of school nursing services and mental health support teams where they are available.

## Intensive Support

If the absence intensifies, we believe the support provided should too. We will work in tandem with the local authority and outside agencies to support children and families.

- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment.
- Where engagement in support is proving contentious or challenging, we will hold more formal conversations with parents and children (if age appropriate). This will be led by our senior Attendance Champion and Attendance Officer and may include a member of our Wellbeing team and our contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team.
- These meetings will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the child and family and the potential need for legal intervention in the future. However, we will also give families opportunities to discuss the barriers to attendance and explain the support which is available to avoid these consequences.
- Where interventions are not resulting in the desired outcome, we will work collaboratively to identify the reasons why and adapt the approach. We will continue to provide opportunities for children and families to engage in support and only proceed to legal action if and when support is no longer appropriate.

## Enforcement

Where support is not successful or is not engaged with, the law protects the children' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, the law will enforce it through prosecuting parents.

## Attendance Contracts

- This is a formal written agreement between a parent and Swalecliffe or the local authority to address irregular attendance at school. It is not a punitive tool and is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and they cannot be agreed upon in a parent's absence. The meeting to discuss this should include the child if they are old enough to understand.
- There is no obligation on the school or local authority to offer an attendance contract and it may not be appropriate in every case, but it should be explored before prosecution.

## Education Supervision Orders

Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal attendance contract has not been successful an ESO can provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution.

- ESO's are made through the Family or High Court
- They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the child and parents to ensure the child receives an efficient, full-time suitable education.
- The ESO initially lasts for 1 year but can be extended.

## Prosecution

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

## 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.

## Penalty Notices

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

Penalty notices can be used by all schools where the child's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence.

- They should be issued to the parent and/or carer that have allowed the absence.
- They must also be issued in line with local codes of conduct which are drawn up and maintained by each local authority
- Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence.
- Where a penalty notice is issued by someone other than a local authority officer, the person issuing the penalty notice is expected to check with the local authority before doing so and must send them copies of any penalty notices issued.
- The threshold is 10 half-day sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closed all within 10 weeks)
- These sessions can be consecutive or not.
- The period of 10 weeks can also span different terms or school years

When a school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, they are expected to make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case.

- Is support appropriate in this case?

- Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 such as where a child has a disability?

If the answer to these questions is yes, then a penalty notice should be issued. If not, another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

- The local authority is expected to publish on their website their code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.
- Payment of penalties must be paid directly to the local authorities, regardless of who issued the penalty notice.
- There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

#### Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness –

- Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council’s Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from April 2017.
- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed within a 10 school-week period leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day-period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings
- We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

### Legal Sanctions

The Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Penalties for unauthorised absences are £80 per child per parent/ carer if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid within 28 days. A second offence is a flat rate of £160, and a third offence would normally lead to legal proceedings.

Penalty notices can be requested by the Heads of School, Local Authority Officer (SLO) or the Police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may consider:

The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

Where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

### Children Missing in Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Executive Headteacher/Head of School and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (child file) has been requested by another school.

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
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
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
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

<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
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<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	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
<b>Y1</b>	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
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	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
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> In police detention</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes

<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	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
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

## Appendix 2: Attendance Groups

Attendance Groups (this is per academic year)			
Green	97% - 100%	Up to 5 Days	No Risk
Yellow	96.1% - 96.9%	7.5 Days Missed	Risk of underachievement
Amber	95% - 96%	12.5 Days Missed	Serious risk of underachievement
Pink	90% - 94.9%	15 Days Missed	Severe risk of underachievement
Red	0% - 89.9%	17.5 Days Missed	Extreme risk – Court action

### Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

