

# Pupil Attendance Policy



Document Information	
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<b>Created by</b>	Harry Portrey
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<b>Signature - Head</b>	H Portrey
<b>Signature - Chair of Governors</b>	R Warr

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Governors and Staff of Delapre Primary School have the highest regard for ensuring regular attendance and punctuality. Attending school on time every day is one of the main factors in determining a child's future and opportunities in life. Children who are absent from school regularly do less well in achieving their academic potential and have fewer career choices. We all want to raise the aspirations for the pupils in our school and are working together to achieve this.

### **Aims**

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.

Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.

Acting early to address patterns of absence.

The school encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that “parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly” (DfE 1999). Our expectation for attendance is a minimum of 95% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.

## **STATUTORY FRAMEWORK, LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance: Working-together-to-improve-school-attendance (19<sup>th</sup> August 2024) and Parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance

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 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#) ➤

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents>[The Education \(Penalty](#)

## [Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made> It also refers to:

- > [School census guidance](#)
- > [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- > [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.

Absence from school will be authorised only at the discretion of the Headteacher based on their assessment of the situation and if it is for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance (ceremony only, not extended leave). This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement, and for the funeral service (not extended leave) or visitation for children in the care of the Local Authority (LAC)
- Holidays granted under exceptional circumstances and agreed by the Headteacher
- Time allocated visits to seriously ill relatives which cannot be scheduled outside of school time
- One day allocation to children of service personnel returning from long operational tours
- 'Reasonable' time to recover from family trauma or crisis
- Temporary time limited timetable by agreement.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **3.1 The Governing Body**

The governing body is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, 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 staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the continued professional development offer and that dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role.
- 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 fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising delegated staff to be able to do so

- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance.
- 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.

### **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 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
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Tom Fisher, he can be contacted via 01604 71456.

### **3.4 The Attendance Officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- 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 when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Officers are Emily Curtis and Sarah Flann and can be contacted via 01604 761456 or [ecurtis@delapre.northants.sch.uk](mailto:ecurtis@delapre.northants.sch.uk) and [sflann@delapre.northants.sch.uk](mailto:sflann@delapre.northants.sch.uk) .

Pastoral Support: Sallyann Shipp (Safeguarding Lead/Family Support Officer) [sshipp@delapre.northants.sch.uk](mailto:sshipp@delapre.northants.sch.uk)

### **3.5 Teachers**

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendices), and submitting this information to the school office.

### **3.6 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 calls from parents/carers to the Teacher / Attendance officer where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **ABSENCE REASON**

Absence will be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher.

#### **Illness**

Parents are expected to notify the school if a child is absent through illness in person, by email or by phone by 9am, giving the reason for the absence.

#### **Medical and Dental appointments – including Hospital and Opticians**

Parents are expected to make every effort for appointments to take place out of school time. When this is unavoidable, parents must seek prior permission and may be asked to produce appointment confirmation. Parents are expected to restrict time to attend appointments to a minimum and where possible for the child to be returned to school as soon as possible that same day.

### **Days of religious observance** (ceremony only, not extended leave).

Absence will be authorised when it is due to religious observance for up to one day per religious event. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. 'R' code will be used. Advance notice must be given in writing.

### **Exceptional family circumstances**

#### Family bereavement

Parents are expected to notify the school where there is absence due to family bereavement. We understand how traumatic such an event can be for a family so appreciate that it may not be possible to follow the procedure as outlined in Section 8, however we would expect to be notified as soon as possible. Such absences will be authorised according to individual circumstances.

#### Funeral service

Parents are expected to provide advance notice to the school for absence to attend funeral service. Typically, one day absence will be authorised except where exceptional circumstances are found.

#### Families from other countries

We appreciate that occasionally it may be necessary following a bereavement for overseas families to make an extended visit home. Parents are expected to follow the above procedure, and requests will be treated sympathetically.

#### Parental visitation for child in care / child in care of Local Authority

Absence will be authorised where parental visitation is required out of county.

### **Holidays granted under exceptional circumstances**

Holidays during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances as outlined in the pupil attendance policy. We generally do not consider a need or desire for holiday or absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

### **Time allocated visits to seriously ill relatives** (which cannot be scheduled outside of school time)

Requests for absence for visits to seriously ill relatives will be considered sympathetically and will be dependent upon individual circumstances.

## **Children of service personnel returning from long operational tours**

One day absence will be authorised for children of service personnel returning from long operational tours where **advanced notice has been provided to the school in writing**

## **Family trauma or crisis**

Parents are expected to notify the school where there is absence due to family trauma or crisis relating to an immediate family relative. Authorisation of absence will be considered to give the child 'Reasonable' time to recover for a period depending on individual circumstances.

## **A temporary, time-limited part time timetable**

Where the school and the resident parent/carer of the pupil have agreed formally that the pupil should be temporarily educated on a part-time bases for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend as part of that timetable.

## **EDUCATION OFF SITE**

As well as the above leaves of absence, schools can allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities or to attend other schools or settings:

- To attend an offsite approved educational activity.
- To attend another school at which the pupil is registered (dual registration).
- To attend provision arranged by the local authority. e.g. alternative provision or as part of an education, health and care plan.
- To participate in an approved sporting activity.
- To attend an educational visit or trip arranged by the school.

As these circumstances are part of delivering a full-time education they are not classified as absences for statistical purposes

## **REQUESTED TERM TIME ABSENCE**

If you require your child/children to take time off during term time, a request form will need to be completed which can be collected from the School Office. Unless the reason for the absence is for exceptional circumstances, the absence will be unauthorised. This is at the Deputy Headteacher's discretion.

Procedure for requesting holidays for exceptional circumstances:

The Parents/Carers should fill in a holiday request form and submit it at least two weeks prior to the holiday date. The attendance team will decide if the absence meets the criteria of 'exceptional circumstance' and inform you of a decision as soon as possible.

If a holiday is agreed this only relates to the specified dates in the holiday request form. Where parents keep a child away longer than the period agreed, the additional days will be recorded as unauthorised.

## **HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

Statutory guidance released by the DfE in August 2013 states that 'Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend together, including weekends and school holidays. Headteachers will rightly prioritise attendance.

## **EXTENDED LEAVE REQUESTS**

In the case where a parent/carer is requesting extended leave for their child, a meeting must be held with the Headteacher or designated person so that an agreed date of departure and return will be agreed. Where possible an address and contact number should be obtained. When a child does not return to school by the agreed date the school will make a "Child Missing from Education" referral to the Local Authority. If no contact has been made with the parent/carer within 10 school days, schools have the right to remove pupils from roll pending investigation by the Children Missing from Education (CME) Officer/ Education Inclusion and Partnership Team (EIPT) to establish the whereabouts of the child. If the child is not located, then the school will be informed that they may remove the child off roll.

## **MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

Any parents/carers requesting permission to take their child out of school for medical or hospital appointments will be requested to provide an appointment card, letter, text message or email, without this the absence could be recorded as unauthorised. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. We look forward to working together to raise achievement and opportunities for all our pupils.

## **LATENESS AND PUNCTUALITY**

All pupils should arrive in school at 8.45 a.m., when teachers are officially on duty. School begins at 8:55 a.m. with the register being taken by the Class Teacher. If a child is not in the class before the register has been completed, they should report to the School Office and be signed in by their parent/carer, recording the reason for lateness. The child/children will then be taken or sent to their classroom by a member of staff.

The late reports are monitored regularly, and any pattern of lateness uncovered. Those arriving late on a regular basis are contacted by one of the Attendance Team i.e. Deputy Headteacher, Family Support Worker (FSW) or the Attendance Co-ordinator in order to try to outline and rectify the problem.

Where a child arrives in school after 9:25 am, the child/children will be marked with an unauthorised absence.

## **FIRST DAY RESPONSE PROCEDURE**

Delapre operate a first day response procedure for all children (further procedures are in place for targeted children/parents with attendance issues and Year 5/6 pupils who are now walking to school alone e.g., further contact daily).

Procedure will be as follows:

### **DAY ONE**

School Office staff are notified of absence through the class register or in person.

School Office staff telephone the first contact member of the family and, if necessary, all other contacts. A message will be left if there is no response.

The time/date is recorded on School Information Management System (SIMS) with any relevant info – on the child's individual attendance record. **Comment must be added to SIMS.**

Risk assess if no response by end of day. Email Family Support Worker (FSW) and Attendance Coordinator with details of any child for whom no contact has been made.

Follow 'Actions & Risk Assessment' (Appendix 1)

*If no reply the next (working) morning, progress to DAY TWO instructions.*

### **DAY TWO (for child deemed not to require Risk Assessment)**

Follow-up telephone call made – preferably from a 'withheld' number, per point 2 above.

The time/date is recorded on SIMS with any relevant info – on the child's individual attendance record. **Comment must be added to SIMS.**

Email FSW and Attendance Coordinator with details of any child for whom no contact has been made.

*If no reply the next (working) morning, progress to DAY THREE instructions.*

### **DAY THREE (for child deemed not to require Risk Assessment)**

School Office to email parents, asking for contact to be made with school immediately. Allow 3 working days for them to respond. If English as an Additional Language (EAL), copy letter into accessible language.

Email FSW and Attendance Coordinator with details of any child for whom no contact has been made.

*If no reply within 3 working days, progress to DAY FIVE/SIX instructions, at which point the FSW and Attendance Coordinator will take over this process.*

### **DAY FIVE/SIX (for child deemed not to require Risk Assessment)**

FSW/Attendance Coordinator to check with School Office to see if any communication has been received before arranging a home visit. Home visit – arrange a visit to the home address ensuring that risk assessments are in place. Two members of staff to attend the visit, one being a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

*If no response at the address, a letter will be posted through the door advising the visit has been made and for the parents/carers to contact school immediately.*

***If no contact within next five working days, progress to DAY TEN.***

*Any communication received by the School Office must be forwarded immediately to the FSW and Attendance Coordinator.*

**DAY TEN – or when all checks completed, whichever is soonest.**

CHILD MUST NOW BE REPORTED AS MISSING FROM EDUCATION by the Attendance Coordinator. Office to be informed at every point in order to complete register accurately.

### **To report a child ‘missing from education’:**

Please complete the online contact form using the following link:

[Tracking children \(and their families\) who have gone missing from education | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/missing-from-education)

### **ADDENDUM TO THE PROCESS ABOVE**

- If a child is unwell, and the parent/carer has called in, this is sufficient for two days (depending on the reason for illness).
- On day 3, if we have not received another call, please contact the parent/carer to confirm the reason for continued absence.
- **Do not leave more than 2 days between calls and, depending on the child, this may require daily checks. Ensure comments recorded on SIMS.**

## **GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER ABSENCE**

Children who are absent from school whilst travelling will be encouraged and supported to register in another school during their time away in order to ensure continuity of education. Ideally the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school.

Absence will be authorised when it is due to traveller cultural observance (as opposed to travelling) for up to one day per event.

Children from the traveller community whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school.

## **SCHOOL CLOSURE**

In the event of an emergency school closure such as strike days, bad weather and other unforeseen events children will be marked with the 'enforced school closure' code so that this does not affect their personal attendance.

## **MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

If a child is absent from school for 10 consecutive days without any contact being made between home and school, the child will be reported as 'Missing from Education' and we will make an immediate referral to the School Attendance Support Service (SASS). During the 10 days of absence, the school will make every attempt to contact the parents through all contact details which the school has on record and will ensure that a home visit has been made. After 20 school days the school will request that SASS remove the child from the school role.

In order to prevent children becoming 'missing from education' parents are requested to inform the school directly of their proposed move and complete a midyear transfer form for signature by the Headteacher.

## **PERSISTENT ABSENCE AND IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE**

The education Act 1996 Section 444 states:

Section 444(1) If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.

Section 444(1a) If in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1) the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause him to do so, he/she is guilty of an offence.

Any pupil who falls below 95% attendance will become a persistent absence pupil and therefore reported through every schools termly census.

Irregular attendance refers to a series of short absences where there has been an unsatisfactory explanation for the absence, or no reason provided.

Where there is an ongoing concern regarding a child's absence and the school have been unable to secure improvements in attendance, a referral will be made to the SASS.

Referrals to SASS may lead to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice or even prosecution.

**Where a child is out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of ten school weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action. This could include,**

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

### **ATTENDANCE CONTRACT**

An attendance Contract is a formal written signed agreement between parents and a school within Northampton Primary Academy Trust and should contain:

- A statement by the parents that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are set out in the contract; and
- A statement by the school agreeing to provide support to the parents for the purpose of complying with the contract.

Attendance Contracts can be used in cases of irregular attendance at school. Attendance Contracts are voluntary, but any non-compliance will be recorded by the school as it may be used as evidence in court.

### **PENALTY NOTICES AND LEGAL ACTION**

#### **Penalty Notices**

Penalty notices can be issued as an alternative to Magistrates' Court proceedings. 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.

Penalty notice 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 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 closes all within 10 school weeks).

These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks).

The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years

## Notices 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.

Notices 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.

They 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 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

## **Prosecution**

Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.

Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment."

## **UNCOLLECTED CHILDREN**

Delapre Primary School works closely with the children, parents, and the community to ensure that all the children have the very best start in life and are kept safe.

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult\* at the end of the day, agreed procedures will be put into practice.

\*Authorised adult means a parent, carer or a friend/relative appointed by the parent/carers to collect the child over the age of 16.

**If a child has not been collected within 15 minutes of finishing time** (according to Key Stage), the procedure will be as follows:

1. Class Teacher: check with School Office to see if any messages have been received, if not take child to the School Office and advise the office staff that the child has not been collected.
2. School Office: call parents/carers on given contact numbers (if no-one available on these numbers advise the member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who is on late duty.
3. Under no circumstances will staff go to look for the parent/carers, nor will they take the child home with them.
4. **If the child has not been collected by 4.15pm – for 3.15pm finishers, 4.20pm – for 3.20pm finishers, or 4.45pm if at a club, and no contact has been established with the parents/carers or other emergency contacts, the SLT member will contact the Police and Social Services who will make emergency arrangements for the child. A full written report will be made of the incident.**

## **Attendance intervention**

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.

- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Set parent meetings to discuss barriers.
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
  - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will use attendance data to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- **Attendance trophies and certificates**

### **Working with parents to improve attendance**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Persistent absence (PA)**

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

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

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

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

### **Legal intervention**

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after **one term**, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

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

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