

Attendance Policy

2026-2027

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1. Policy Aims and Principles

This policy aims to ensure that:

- The profile of attendance and promoting a positive attitude to school attendance is raised so that all students are encouraged to achieve a good rate of attendance to maximise opportunities available to them throughout their time at school.
- In recognition of the overwhelming correlation between good attendance and good outcomes for young people, all students achieve a minimum attendance of 96% (182/190 days) as per the Department for Education's (DfE) guidance.

Principles:

- To foster a high expectation of students' attendance in school on a regular basis.
- To raise family awareness of the importance of a child's regular attendance.
- To inform families about the need for legitimate reasons for absence.
- To maintain an accurate online system for registering and monitoring attendance.
- To maintain a clear policy on attendance which is known to all staff, students and families.
- To maintain clear communication both within the school and between school and families

2. Legislation and Guidance

Families have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the [Education Act 1996](#).

This policy has been created in accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance, [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (updated August 2024)

The law on school attendance entitles every student to attend a full-time educational provision suitable for their age, ability and SEND need. Parents and carers have a legal obligation to make sure their child receives that education by attending a school. Where parents decide to register their child at school, it is the additional responsibility of the parent to ensure their child attends that school every day, except in a

small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from school.

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) with the most recent publication being issued in August 2024, the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures and refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census which explains the Persistent Absence threshold. These are drawn from the following legislation and guidance setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The [Education Act 1996](#)
- The [Children Act 1989](#)
- The [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)
- The [Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- The [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- The [Equality Act 2010](#)
- The [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#), as amended
- The [Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)
- The [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)
- The [Sentencing Act 2020](#)
- Department for Education, [Working together to improve school attendance \(August 2024\)](#)
- Department for Education, [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(September 2025\)](#) date and link to be updated when released
- Department for Education, [Children Missing Education \(September 2016\)](#)
- Kent County Council, [Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct \(August 2024\)](#)
- Kent County Council, [School Attendance Guidance and Procedures](#)

3. Supporting and Encouraging Good Attendance

Whilst any child or young person may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the family and the child or young person. If a child or young person is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. Condoning absence, particularly at an early age, can lead to habitual patterns of non-attendance and can give students the impression that attendance does not matter.

Families can support students by:

- ensuring regular routines and early bedtimes.
- helping with homework.
- having uniform and equipment prepared the night before.
- providing a healthy breakfast, which can also be obtained from our school restaurant.
- reporting any academic or social concerns promptly to the school.
- retaining an open and honest communication with our school.
- being positive about school (even if their own experience was less than positive).

Strategies to promote good attendance in school:

- EKC Sheppey Secondary will provide an environment where students feel safe, valued and welcome. Our ethos must demonstrate that students feel their presence is important and that it is vital for their achievement and progress. Students need to know they will be missed, and any absence will be followed up by their relevant year team.
- Students who feel vulnerable and experience difficulties attending class or have friendship problems will be supported and given strategies to help them cope. Year teams will be key members of staff involved in liaising with their teachers.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all students. Special provision will be made for identified students.

- A clearly defined and consistent approach to positive behaviour management exists to provide a fair system and support for all students, especially those who have difficulties; focusing on positive relationships and rewarding the positive.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to students' needs and support is available whenever possible.
- Attendance data will be produced and monitored regularly and analysed to identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support.
- High attendance will be recognised and rewarded regularly.
- Students whose attendance is a cause for concern will be monitored closely and discussed in weekly meetings.
- Families will be reminded regularly through school communications of the importance of regular attendance.
- Daily phone calls will be made for unexplained absences.
- Home visits may be organised for students that have consecutive unexplained absences.
- Students who have been absent for an extended period of time, or who are experiencing serious attendance problems, will have individually tailored programmes to support them.
- School staff will liaise with other services/agencies that may assist students who are experiencing difficulties.
- Inclusion Team representatives and the Inclusion Deputy will have regular meetings where attendance issues are discussed.
- Referrals to the SEND team will be made for students who have concerns over their mental health.
- Referral will be made to the SEND team to investigate undiagnosed needs.
- The Attendance Lead and Deputy Headteacher will report to the Governing body every term on attendance matters.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. School Responsibility:

To encourage excellent attendance, the school will work with families to identify the root causes and barriers to attendance, at home, in school and to work with families and external agencies to ultimately get the best outcome. We aim to:

- build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, students and parents understand.
- accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
- recognise that absence is a symptom and that improving student's attendance is part of improving the student's overall welfare. This can be achieved by prioritising attendance in strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting students with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students including use of student premium and support for young carers and children with a social worker.
- recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school and liaising with students, parents and external agencies where needed. The Senior Attendance Champion is expected to set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff and have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school. It is an ongoing

responsibility, and the Senior Attendance Champion is also expected to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.

- make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with students and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of student premium funding. Where possible this should include attendance or pastoral support staff (either school based or contracted) who can work in partnership with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders, the local authority's School Attendance Support Team known as KPAS (Kent PRU & Attendance Service) and other partners.
- set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students and communicate these regularly to students and parents through all available channels. In doing so, schools should help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development. It should also include clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.
- visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or in registration periods. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.
- recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.
- recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to students and families. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at individual students, cohorts and year groups (including their punctuality) across the school to help schools achieve their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. Use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with students and to leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and student premium leads).
- undertake frequent individual level analysis to identify the students who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This should include analysis of students and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- benchmark their attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of school wide attendance strategies and to develop further strategies to drive improvement.
- provide data and reports to support the work of the board or governing body.
- regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming 'Persistent' or 'Severe'.
- be particularly mindful of students absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.
- ensure students with good and rapidly improving attendance and/or punctuality are recognised and rewarded.

- ensure students with poor attendance and/or punctuality are investigated through school referral procedures and challenged through school support with the last resort of involving the local authority sanctions.
- ensure parents/carers are supported to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and are punctual in attending at the start of the school day and at the start of each lesson.
- ensure students and their parents/carers are made aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality and are informed of the consequences when it is not.
- report to parents/carers regularly on how their child is performing at the school, what their attendance and punctuality rates are and how these relate to their attainment and progress.
- facilitate and formalise support where absence persists. This may include referrals to Early Help, Mental Health support agencies, SEND support and GRT support.
- complete home visits, where needed. If a home visit is carried out and the student is not seen by a member of staff, we may complete a referral through Kent Integrated Children Services Portal (Front Door and other services).
- where barriers are outside of the school's control, work together with all partners to support students and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this should include meeting with students and parents at risk of Persistent or Severe Absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them.
- where absence intensifies, increase the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners.
- include, if the needs and barriers are individual to the student, provision of mentoring, careers advice, college placements, 1-2-1 tuition or out of hours learning or, where appropriate, an education, health and care plan or alternative provision.
- 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 challenging, schools should hold more formal conversations with the parents (and student where they are old enough to understand). This is likely to be led by the school's Senior Attendance Champion and may include the school's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team. These meetings should clearly explain the consequences of Persistent and Severe Absence to the student and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future, but should also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with all schools should work with the local authority to:

- put formal support in place in the form of an attendance contract or an education supervision order.
- issue a Notice to Improve and/or Penalty Notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour.
- intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
- prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a Community or Parenting Order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

4.2. Family Responsibilities

To encourage excellent attendance, parents/carers:

- have a legal duty to send their children to school regularly and risk prosecution/fines if they fail in this duty. Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence.

- cannot approve absences for their child.
- should attempt to arrange appointments for their child or young person outside normal school hours whenever possible. Wherever possible the student will be expected to attend school before and/or after the appointment.
- ensure their children attend school on time.
- must phone the Attendance line every day for every absence and to leave a message if there is no answer on the telephone line or email attendance@ekcss.org.
- provide medical evidence for any appointments that results in an absence.

4.3. Inclusion Team Responsibility

The Attendance Team consists of a Senior Leader who will oversee attendance, Attendance Leads and Attendance Year Group Managers.

To encourage excellent attendance, the Attendance Team will:

- carefully monitor the attendance and punctuality of all students.
- identify any attendance problems and students that are at risk of persistent absence.
- liaise closely with pastoral and safeguarding staff as well as the Headteacher to support attendance and punctuality initiatives.
- ensure class teachers liaise proactively with the team to help identify and address attendance issues.
- take relevant action where attendance is a cause for concern, e.g. telephone families to discuss the problem, make home visits, refer to outside agencies, organise meetings with families to decide on the appropriate intervention.
- in the case of students who refuse to attend school, home visits are carried out to ascertain reasons for absence.
- pursue enforcement action where no significant improvement has been made to attendance. This is the process agreed by the Local Authority and all schools to address irregular or non-school attendance.
- on discovering truancy, inform the student's family and Year Team the same day and ensure appropriate sanctions are applied.

4.4 The Attendance Champion

The Attendance Champion and Senior Leader overseeing attendance is Mr Slater-Powell. He is responsible for:

- setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence.
- having a strong grasp of absence data.
- regularly monitoring and evaluating progress.

4.5 Student Responsibility

To encourage excellent attendance, students:

- must ensure that they arrive promptly, attend all morning and afternoon sessions and timetabled lessons punctually.
- discuss promptly with the Attendance Team any problems that may affect their attendance.
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

Note: Permission to leave the site will normally only be given for fixed term exclusion, or authorised medical/dental appointments with supporting evidence.

4.6 Staff Responsibility

To encourage excellent attendance, teaching staff:

- monitor class attendance and report any cause for concern to the Attendance Team.
- have frequent discussions with students about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- support students who have been absent in completing missed work.
- ensure registers are taken on time and accurately
- follow up suspicious absences by informing the Year Team and Attendance Team immediately.

5. Registers

Registers are completed using Bromcom MIS (or on paper if Bromcom is unavailable).

Registers are legal documents and must be taken clearly and accurately, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1). All schools are required by law to keep an attendance register and no gaps in registration can be left. The attendance register must be taken every lesson from the start of the first session of each school day (morning) and during the second sessions (afternoon) of the school day to mark whether every student is:

- present.
- attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- absent.
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendments made to the register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made and the name of the person who made the amendment.

Registers must be taken within the first 10 minutes of each registration session. Failure to do so could result in a formal reminder and potentially, disciplinary action. The Attendance Team will check that teaching staff are completing registers promptly and accurately (see appendix 2).

If a student arrives after the register has closed, they will be recorded as late by an attendance team member. Students arriving after the registration has closed without an acceptable reason, will be issued a U code, therefore an unauthorised absence for that session.

The school will preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered.

Our school's daily attendance data must be shared with the DfE.

6. Illness during the school day

If a student becomes significantly unwell during the day, they should inform their Pastoral Team or ask a teacher to do so. Students should not contact parents/carers directly.

Senior Leaders will then assess the illness and make decisions about whether families need to be informed and whether a student will be sent home, wait and/or return to class.

No student should leave the school premises for such arising medical reasons without a Senior Leaders permission and in consultation with a named contact.

In the event of a student being genuinely unwell and unable to continue with the school day, contact will be made with their family. In the interest of safeguarding the students, arrangements will be made for the student to be collected by a family member listed as a contact in Bromcom.

Appropriate First Aid will be administered where deemed necessary by a trained First Aider.

7. Absence Procedure

7.1. Authorised Illness

EKCSS Sheppey Secondary is only able to grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances, in accordance with the *School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024* and the Department for Education's statutory guidance, *Working together to improve school attendance* (August 2024).

All further absences will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided. Please note the following are acceptable as medical evidence: appointment card, letter, sick note, appointment text or prescribed medication.

On the first day of a student's absence, a family member as listed in Bromcom should contact the school to report the absence. This should be done by a telephone call to the attendance line or email attendance@ekcss.org and at the earliest opportunity, but at least by 8:30am, giving a reason for the absence and a date when the child or young person is expected to return. The family member should call from the number registered, or from the email, on Bromcom (no other number will be accepted) and the absence will be marked unauthorised in the absence of supporting evidence for an authorised absence. The family member should contact the school on each subsequent day of absence. Please note the attendance office does not open until 8am. There is a high volume of calls every day meaning you may not get through, however, a voicemail can be left in this instance with a detailed reason for absence. An email and push notification on MCAS to the Priority 1 parent for any student with an N code for absence is set for 10.15am reminding them to contact the Attendance Office. Daily contact will also be made by a member of the Attendance Team for any N coded student if a reason has not been provided by a registered family member, with priority given to those on the Vulnerable List. The school may also contact other listed contacts.

If the absence involves a serious physical injury, with implications upon the student's return to school, a risk assessment will be carried out by a member of the Inclusion Team for each specific case.

EKC Sheppey Secondary understands the difficulty of obtaining same-day GP appointments, however there are a number of walk-in clinics who provide confirmation of emergency appointments. For symptoms such as headaches, we advise your child taking suitable medication in the morning and attending school.

All contact should be made by phoning or emailing the Attendance Office number on: 01795 582500 (option 1) or attendance@ekcss.org

7.2 Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from our school has to be classified by the Attendance Team (not by families), as either 'Authorised' or 'Unauthorised'. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will *not* be authorised:

- Family holidays
- Families keeping children off school unnecessarily (persistent nonspecific illness following the 5 authorised days within an academic year e.g. poorly/unwell/headache/sore throat)
- Absence for illness when attendance is below 95% unless medical evidence is provided
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without exceptional and/or evidenced reasons (distance is taken into consideration)
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been properly explained via email/telephone/message
- Children who report their own absence
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (oversleeping/missed the bus)
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

- Period pains (unless medical evidence is provided)
- Weddings for people other than immediate family members
- Moving house
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Young Carer responsibilities

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

Where absence escalates and students miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these students. In doing so, schools should sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

Particular focus will be given by all partners to students who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These 'Severely Absent' students may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners will work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

A student becomes a 'Persistent Absentee' when their attendance falls below 90% for whatever reason. Absence at this level can cause considerable damage to any child or young person's educational prospects and the fullest support and cooperation is needed from parents/carers to tackle this.

Any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absence threshold or at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority; families will be informed of this immediately and remedial action will be taken.

Action will likely mean working with outside agencies to hopefully put support in place before legal action is discussed. This may result in an ASI referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and families will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made to the Local Authority, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to families and minutes of any meetings need to be attached to the completed ASI referral form with any other relevant information.

7.3(a) Students with medical conditions or Special Educational Needs and disabilities

Students can face additional barriers to attendance if they suffer from long term medical conditions or SEND needs and disabilities. The school aims to work with families to improve attendance and remove the barriers these students face and put additional support in place where necessary to allow them to access full time education. This can include:

- organising meetings and developing good relationships with the family.
- making reasonable adjustments for the individual student.
- making necessary referral to the relevant agency to support the family and student.
- liaising with the school's SEND team and the local authority SEND team.

7.4 Exceptional Absence

Leave of Absence

Due to DfE regulations, Headteachers are not able to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time. The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any student absent during term time, unless granted by the headteacher because of exceptional circumstances, will be recorded as an 'unauthorised' absence.

Families must apply to Attendance@ekcss.org to take a student out of school for planned absences. The Attendance Team will notify them in writing of the decision to refuse/grant permission and will code accordingly. Families who disregard a refusal to authorise an absence and still take their child on holiday may receive a letter informing them of a request for a Penalty Notice

In line with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct and national attendance regulations, a Penalty Notice may be issued where a pupil has accrued 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. This may include unauthorised term-time leave, persistent lateness after the close of registration, or other unauthorised absences.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child. The first Penalty Notice is charged at £80 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid within 28 days. A second Penalty Notice issued within a rolling three-year period will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay may result in further legal action, including prosecution.

Part Time Timetable

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a student's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a student of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a student from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the student access as much education as possible. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a student's behaviour.

In extreme cases, the headteacher can authorise a part time timetable:

- where the student is of compulsory school age and
- the parent whom the student normally lives makes a request and
- with school agreement that the student should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and
- have agreed the times and dates when the student will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.

A part-time timetable should:

- have the agreement of both the school and the parent the student normally lives with.
- have a clear ambition and be part of the student's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- have regular review dates which include the student and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the student, after which the student is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision.

It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a student with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

Where the student has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process. If the student has an Education Health and Care Plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the Local Authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a student being absent

from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record the absence accordingly (normally using code X or C2).

Education Offsite

As well as the above leaves of absence, all schools can also allow students 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. (For full details see Code B)
- To attend another school at which the student is registered (dual-registration). (For full details see Code D)
- To attend provision arranged by the local authority. e.g. alternative provision or as part of an education, health and care plan. (For full details see Code K)
- To participate in an approved sporting activity. (For full details see Code P)
- To attend an educational visit or trip arranged by the school. (For full details see Code V)
- To attend work experience. (For full details see Code W)

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

8. Analysing and Reporting Attendance Data

The Attendance Team reviews attendance on a daily basis and monitors this continually, producing reports on a weekly, termly and yearly basis. These reports compare attendance data with the national average, previous years and are shared with the schools Senior Leadership Team and the Local Governing Body.

All teachers should look for any patterns in absence and investigate or report their concerns to the Attendance Team. If a student's attendance level drops below 96% the cause will be investigated by the school's Attendance Team who will liaise with families and potentially outside agencies, where required.

Where applicable, we will report absence to outside agencies e.g. social services, youth teams, Early Help and other relevant professionals.

9. Monitoring attendance and punctuality at offsite provisions

Where students attend external provision, weekly registration information is received from the external providers. These are monitored and any concerns reported to the Attendance Team or DHT for Inclusion.

10. Lateness and Punctuality Procedure

10.1 Lateness

Alongside accurate recording of attendance and absence, effective schools have robust day to day processes to track and follow up absence and poor punctuality which are rigorously applied across the school. All schools are expected to develop processes that meet the needs of their students and contexts. As a minimum this should include arrangements to:

- proactively manage lateness and set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a student will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes.
- expect parents to contact the school when their child is late to morning registration to explain
- Schools, particularly secondary schools, may also wish to monitor lesson attendance within sessions to identify patterns of absence within the school day and deal with any students who are on site but not attending lessons through pastoral and special educational needs or disability support or behaviour policy.

Punctuality Procedure

Students arriving after registration time will receive a late mark (L) in the register. If a student is going to be late, families have a responsibility to inform the school of their child's lateness by telephone.

Registers close at 8:50am. Students arriving after this time must report to Main Reception to sign in. After this time, the attendance mark will be coded as U, which is an unauthorised absence for the morning session and will affect the student's attendance percentage.

Students will be challenged for poor/persistent punctuality as follows:

- Lateness to school without a valid reason will result in a sanction
- Late marks to lessons can result in the following:
 - A detention issued by the year team.
 - A letter being sent home.
 - Placed on an attendance report for punctuality.
 - Referred by the Attendance Team or year group team to outside agencies

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (coded as 'U') will be discussed with families and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice

11. Prosecution Procedure and Penalty Notices

11.1. Prosecution Procedure

Reducing unauthorised absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a student's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and learning of others.

Truancing can also leave a student vulnerable to antisocial behaviour and youth crime. Truancing lessons during a school day is banned and will result in consequences for students who decide to truant.

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child or young person fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (absences without a valid reason). Parents/carers are legally responsible for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually. This applies even if children are missing school without the knowledge of their parent/carer.

11.2 Penalty Notices

In line with national attendance guidance and Kent County Council procedures, parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives a suitable full-time education and attends school regularly. Failure to secure regular school attendance may result in legal intervention.

Under Section 444 of the [Education Act 1996](#), parents/carers may be prosecuted if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. On conviction, this may result in a fine of up to £2,500, a community order, or imprisonment for up to three months. The Local Authority may also apply for an Education Supervision Order (ESO).

Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence are issued in accordance with [Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct](#) and the Department for Education's [Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance](#).

A Penalty Notice may be considered where a pupil has accrued 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The 10 sessions of absence do not need to be consecutive and may include unauthorised term-time leave, persistent lateness after the close of registration, or other unauthorised absence.

A Penalty Notice may also be issued where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, in accordance with the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#).

Before a Penalty Notice is issued, the school and/or Local Authority will usually issue a Notice to Improve, setting out the support offered, expectations for improvement, and a specified period during which no further unauthorised absence should occur.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child. The first Penalty Notice issued for a child in a three-year rolling period will be charged at £80 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid within 28 days. A second Penalty Notice issued within the same three-year period will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. A third offence within the three-year period is likely to result in prosecution rather than another Penalty Notice.

Failure to pay a Penalty Notice in full within the specified timescale may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

12. Attendance Contracts

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school or local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. An attendance contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate.

An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it 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 in a parent's absence.

There is no obligation on the school or local authority to offer an attendance contract, and it may not be appropriate in every instance, but an attendance contract should always be explored before moving forward to an education supervision order or prosecution.

The aim from the outset should be for the parent(s), and the student where they are old enough, the school and the local authority to work in partnership. Where a school and/or local authority decide to use an attendance contract, a meeting should be arranged with the parent(s). It should include the student if they are old enough to understand. The meeting should explain the purpose of an attendance contract and why using one would be beneficial in the family's circumstances. The parent(s) should be asked to outline their views on the student's attendance at school, any underlying issues and how they believe these should be addressed. The meeting should also allow them to share their views on the idea of an attendance contract and what type of support they think would be helpful to secure the student's regular attendance. Where a parent fails to attend the meeting without good reason or notification, further attempts should be made to contact them and arrange another meeting but all attempts at support should be recorded.

One attendance contract may be arranged with all parents, or in circumstances where it is desirable to have different requirements for each parent then separate attendance contracts for each parent should be arranged. All attendance contracts should contain:

- Details of the requirements the parent(s) is expected to comply with.
- A statement from the school and/or local authority agreeing to provide support to the parent(s) to meet the requirements and setting out details of the support.
- A statement by the parent that they agree to comply with the requirements for the period of time specified by the contract.

The requirements specified, and the support provided, will depend on the individual case, and should be tailored to the needs of the individual parent and family. There is not, therefore, a prescribed list, but requirements may include:

- Measures to ensure the student attends school or alternative provision punctually and regularly
- Requiring the parent to attend meetings with the school and/or local authority • Accessing or partaking in the support or programmes offered

- Working with or accessing other separate support provided to the student at school level (e.g. being on report)

The support provided to help the parent satisfy those requirements may include:

- Provision of a lead practitioner to support the family
- Signposting or referrals to wider local authority or health services that might support the family (e.g. housing needs, drug and alcohol support)
- Signposting or referrals to voluntary and community sector programmes or support (e.g. foodbanks or community support groups)
- Formal interventions such as family group conferencing, peer mentoring or literacy classes
- Support and advisory services (e.g. benefit support)
- Formal parenting programmes (e.g. a course with a specified number of sessions)

Attendance contracts do not have a minimum or maximum duration. Each individual attendance contract should set out the duration it will be in place, and most are for between 3 and 12 months but can be longer if needed.

Once the requirements and support elements of the attendance contract have been agreed, the school and/or local authority and the parent should write up the contract together and sign it. The attendance contract should be written in language that the parent can easily understand (including a translation where necessary). All parties, including other partners working with the family, should be given a copy.

Non-compliance with an attendance contract

The school and/or local authority should work in partnership with the parent to gain their cooperation and compliance throughout the attendance contract process.

Where a parent does not comply with the requirements set out in the attendance contract, the lead practitioner should contact the parent and seek an explanation and decide whether it is reasonable, and the attendance contract remains useful. If the explanation shows that the attendance contract is proving difficult to comply with through no fault of the parent, then a meeting should be arranged with the parent to review and amend it. Where no explanation is given, or the lead practitioner is not satisfied with the explanation, they should serve the parent with a warning to explain that the attendance contract is not working and may be terminated, and another course of action pursued, if the parent does not engage. This may be in the form of a letter, and record of it should be kept.

If there are further instances of non-compliance, they should arrange a meeting with the parent to review the attendance contract and discuss how it can be made to work. Following this meeting, the school and/or local authority should decide whether the noncompliance is undermining the contract to the extent that it is no longer useful in which case an alternative course of action (such as a different legal intervention) would need to be decided upon. The decision and reasons should be recorded.

Attendance contracts are voluntary formal agreements between parents/carers, the school, and, where appropriate, the Local Authority, designed to support improved school attendance. In line with the Department for Education's [Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance](#) and [Kent County Council Attendance Contract Guidance](#), attendance contracts may be used where voluntary support has not secured sufficient improvement in attendance.

Attendance contracts are not legally binding and failure by the parent/carer, school, or Local Authority to comply with the terms of the agreement cannot result in action for breach of contract or civil damages. Parents/carers cannot be compelled to sign an attendance contract, and there is no criminal sanction for refusing to engage with one.

However, where a pupil's attendance does not improve and legal intervention becomes necessary, any failure to engage with agreed support or comply with the expectations set out within the attendance contract may be presented as evidence in court as part of the Local Authority's consideration of further enforcement action under the [Education Act 1996](#).

It is therefore important that schools maintain accurate records of all meetings, support offered, agreed actions, and any non-compliance with the attendance contract process.

Education Supervision Order

Where a voluntary Early Help plan, or formal attendance contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be a useful alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. In deciding whether to progress to an ESO, the school and local authority should have exhausted voluntary support and be clear that making the order would be beneficial for the student and parent. Where safeguarding concerns exist, the lead practitioner should also discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and children's social care services and agree an ESO would be a more suitable option than a s.17 (Children in Need) or s.47 (Child Protection) plan. In all cases, local authorities must fully consider using an ESO before moving forward to prosecution.

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

The order initially lasts for one year, but extensions can be secured within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

If it is decided to progress with an ESO, the local authority should notify parents in writing of the intention to consider an ESO and set up a meeting to discuss with the parent (including the student if they are old enough to understand). Following the conversation, the local authority should make its decision and inform the parent and student of whether the case will be taken forward to court or not. Where the decision is to proceed, this can be combined with the service of an application notice. Once an ESO is secured, an officer of the local authority should be chosen to act as the supervisor of the order on the authority's behalf; this does not need to be an attendance officer, rather it should be whichever lead practitioner is working with the family (including their social worker where appropriate). Schools should, however, work in partnership with the local authority and whilst the designated supervisor (the local authority) retains overall responsibility, schools can and should provide support and supervision where appropriate. The supervisor must determine any directions (requirements the parent must adhere to) to give whilst the order is in force. There is not a prescribed list, but they may include:

- Requiring the parent(s) to attend support meetings
- Requiring the parent(s) to attend a parenting programme or counselling
- Requiring the parent(s) to access support services
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist
- Review meetings involving all parties (including the school) should be held every 3 months throughout the period the ESO is in force. At these meetings any actions and directions should be discussed and added or amended.

Non-compliance with an ESO

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

The lead officer should also raise persistent failure to comply with children's social care services and work together to investigate the circumstances of the student and decide whether it is appropriate for any further action to be taken (including statutory social care involvement) to secure their welfare.

12. Leaving EKC Sheppey Secondary

We are always disappointed to say goodbye to our students. If a student is leaving us because they are relocating or they are changing schools, we must be informed. We need the student's new address and the details of the new school, including school name, address and start date.

This safeguarding procedure means that we know that the student is still in education, safe and well. If a parent/carer decides to homeschool their child, it is essential that you inform school in writing. This can be via an email, addressed to the Headteacher (Miss January Lorman) at: office@ekcss.org.

13. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every year. This is so that it remains up to date, useful, and relevant.

14. Link to other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Inclusion Policy

15. Appendices

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present AM	Pupil present at morning registration
\	Present PM	Pupil present at afternoon registration
L	Late before register closes	Pupil arrives late before the register closes
U	Late after register closes	Pupil arrives after the register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Approved supervised educational activity off site
D	Dual registered	Pupil attending another setting where also registered
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil attending local authority arranged alternative provision
P	Sporting activity	Approved supervised sporting activity
V	Educational trip or visit	Educational visit or trip approved by the school
W	Work experience	Approved work experience placement
J	Interview	Interview for employment, training, or further/higher education
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Exceptional circumstances authorised by the Headteacher
M	Medical or dental appointment	Attending a medical or dental appointment
I	Illness	Absence due to illness where appropriate notification has been received
R	Religious observance	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
S	Study leave	Approved study leave for Year 11 pupils
T	Traveller absence	Traveller pupil travelling for occupational purposes
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	No alternative provision has been arranged
G	Unauthorised leave of absence	Term-time leave not authorised by the school
N	Reason not yet provided	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Unauthorised absence	Absence without an acceptable reason

X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Pupil not required to attend school
Y1-Y7	Exceptional circumstances	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Admission process not yet completed
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Holiday, INSET day, or planned closure

Appendix 2: Register Procedure

EKC Sheppey Secondary takes the safety of its students to the highest degree. Below outlines the Register Procedure that all staff must adhere to. Any error(s) on the registers throughout the day will receive a warning. This can be for a variety of reasons including taking a register late, marking a student absent when in lesson or vice versa. It is with utmost importance that all staff are taking accurate registers for the Attendance Team to identify as soon as possible when a student is missing. If three errors are made, a meeting with the Headteacher takes place where it can be decided if disciplinary action is needed depending on the circumstance.

In the event Bromcom/the internet is not working, you must complete a paper based register. Please ensure all of the information is completed i.e. class code, staff code, date.

Tier	Number of Errors	Consequence	Examples of Errors
1	3	Email from Attendance with Attendance Lead cc'd in. Attendance Lead to informally meet with MoS.	• Taking a register late • Not taking a register • Marking a student present when absent • Marking a student absent when present • Not updating a register with a late mark when a student arrives late to your lesson. • Not informing the attendance team that a student is attending intervention. • Entering the wrong code.
2	5	Attendance Lead to meet with Line Manager.	
3	8	Meeting with Headteacher	

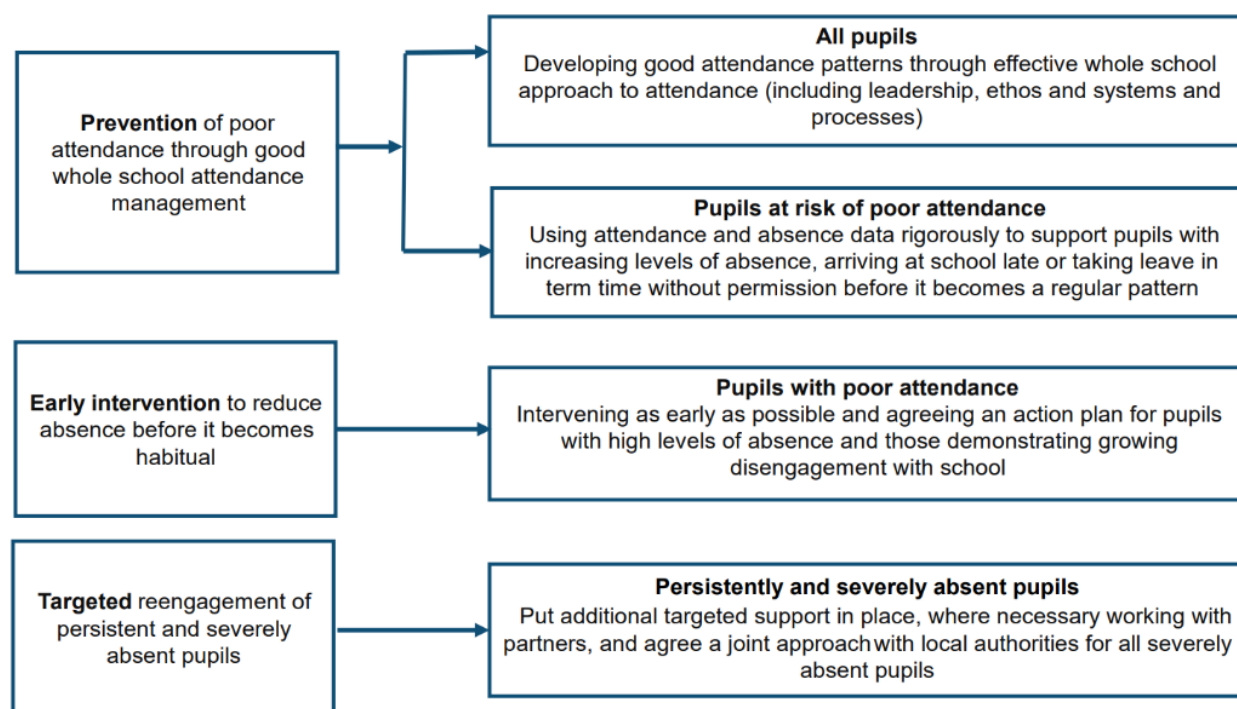
Appendix 3: Leave of Absence Request Form

We strongly advise that you do not take your child out of school during term time for a holiday. This could be very detrimental to their learning. Government regulations* state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can leave from school if the leave is granted. Parents should apply for the leave, using this Leave of Absence Form, at least 3 weeks prior to the absence. The Head of school will make a decision based on the conditions described above. Leave cannot be granted retrospectively and Penalty Notices will be requested for each parent/guardian for unauthorised absences. A parent who is not happy with the Head of School's decision has the right of appeal to the Trust Principal. The decision of the Trust Principal is final. *Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 In order for your absence request to be considered, the below document is required to be completed in full.

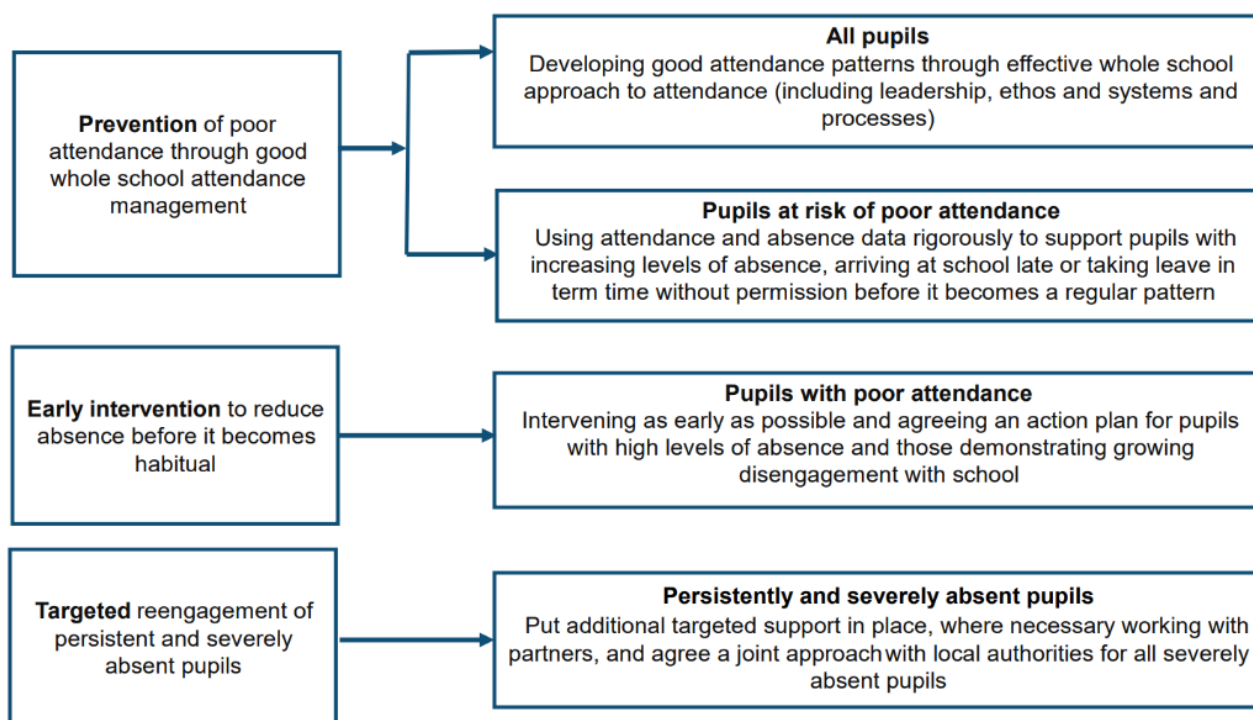
Appendix 4: Effective School Attendance Management

Expect	Aspire to high standards of attendance from all students and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school
Monitor	Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
Listen and Understand	When a pattern is spotted, discuss with students and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
Facilitate Support	Remove barriers in school and help students and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
Formalise Support	Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.
Enforce	Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the student's right to an education.

Effective school attendance improvement and management



Effective school attendance improvement and management



Kent County Council's Kent Pru and Attendance Service (KPAS) summary guidance table

Communication with family Build relationships	Facilitate support Identify and unblock internal barriers	Reach out Signpost to / access universal and additional support	Formalise approach Intensify support
- Hold meetings in school and ensure the right staff with the right skills participate depending on circumstances. - Make reasonable adjustments to promote family's attendance at meetings. - Use a strengths-based and solution focused approach in all meetings. - Make home visits where parents are unresponsive, pupil's absence sustained, or other potential concerns which may not be visible without outreach.	- The voice of the child should always be prioritised. - Consider all push and pull factors between home and school. - Follow a plan-do-review cycle – sustaining attendance never ends. - Deploy relevant school-based interventions available to remedy any barriers stemming from within school. - Use any data available to assist in identifying any habitual patterns of absence. - Keep chronology of key events.	- KCC Early Help link worker - KCC PIAS link officer - District conversation (KCC Youth Hub/Children's Centre) - Virtual School Kent Advisory Team re Ever 6 Children with Social Worker (CWSW) and previously looked after children (PLAC) - KCC area Education Safeguarding Advisers - Information, Advice & Support Kent (IASK) - District contextual safeguarding meetings (DCSM) - Forums such as EBSA consultations - Online resources (e.g., Resilience Hub and apps) - Health services	- Explore any changing or emerging barriers to attendance as circumstances evolve, and practical solutions. - Consider a parenting / family contract. - Invite link PIAS Officer to a formal attendance meeting via the Digital Front Door. - Make a request for support where concerns meet criteria at level 3 or above of the Support Levels Guidance using the Kent Children's Portal. <i>(Seek parental consent unless a serious or urgent Child Protection concern).</i>