

# Attendance Policy

## 2024-2025

Approved by:	
Last reviewed:	June 2024
Next review due by:	June 2025
Responsible for Review:	DHT - Inclusion

## Contents

1. Policy aims and Principles
2. Legislation and guidance
3. Supporting and Encouraging Good Attendance
4. Roles and Responsibilities
5. Registers
6. Illness during the school day
7. Absence Procedure
8. Analysing and Reporting Attendance Data
9. Monitoring attendance and punctuality at offsite provision
10. Punctuality Procedure
11. Prosecution Procedure and Penalty Notices
12. Leaving EKC Sheppey Secondary
13. Monitoring and Review
14. Links to other Policies
15. Appendices
  - Appendix 1: Attendance Codes
  - Appendix 2: Register Procedure
  - Appendix 3: Leave of Absence Request Form

---

### 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.

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 as to 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 following the government guidance issued in May 2022, [Working together to improve school attendance](#).

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 May 2022, 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 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 Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Anti-social behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Parenting contract and parenting orders\)\(England\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Sentencing Act \(2020\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(2007\)](#)
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63049617e90e0729e63d3953/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63049617e90e0729e63d3953/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

### **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 comms. 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 hopes to 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 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. Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings should then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- 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, all partners should work together 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, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners
- If the needs and barriers are individual to the student this may include 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 13 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.
- Ensures their children attend school on time.
- Communicate with the Attendance team daily regarding every absence. Parents and carers must phone the Attendance line every day for every absence. It is encouraged to leave a message if there is no answer on the telephone line.

### **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 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.
- Provide medical evidence for any appointments that results in an absence.

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

### **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 (a paper copy is always available should the Bromcom system not be available).

Registers are legal documents and must be taken clearly and accurately, using the correct symbols/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 should report to reception to be entered as late. Students arriving after the registration has closed without an acceptable reason, will be issued a U code, therefore an unauthorised absence for that session.

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 genuinely unwell during the day, a pastoral call will be made by their teacher. Students should not contact parents/carers directly.

Staff 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 staff permission (based on whether contact has been made with a family member at home).

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 for specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the 2024 attendance regulations.

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/email to the attendance line 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 on Bromcom, no other number will be accepted, and the absence will be marked unauthorised. 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 daily 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 code student if a reason has not been provided by a registered family member, with priority given to those on the Vulnerable List.

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 the Attendance Office number on: (TBC)

## **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 (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- 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 very good 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/misled 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

### **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 should 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 PA mark 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**

EKCSS's Headteacher is 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 'unauthorised' absence.

Families must apply through the Leave of Absence form on the website to take a student out of school for a holiday. The Attendance Team will notify them in writing of this decision to refuse/grant permission and will code accordingly. Families who disregard this and still take their child on holiday will receive a

letter informing them of a request for a penalty notice and to ask them to ensure their child has good attendance for the rest of the year (minimum 96%). (see appendix 3)

A fixed Penalty Notice may be issued by the local authority where 'a student has been taken on a holiday during term time, the absence has not been authorised by the school, and the child's attendance is below the Local Authority average for the previous school year or 3 terms.

The penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receiving a notice and £120 if paid after this but within 28 days.

### **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, both the parent who the student normally lives with and school agree 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 parttime 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 absent to explain the reason and put in place processes to contact parents on the first day of absence where a reason has not been provided. If absence continues without explanation, further contact should be made to ensure safeguarding.
- Identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents (and where appropriate foster carers and/or social workers/ youth offending team workers) to understand why and when the student will return. Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Where reasonably possible hold more than one emergency contact number for each student. This is good practice to give the school additional options to make contact with a responsible adult.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identify students who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority and Secretary of State.
- Support students back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

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 and will affect your 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
  - A penalty notices (frequent lateness after the register has closed (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 the Local Authority, parents/carers can be prosecuted, fined up to £2,500 and/or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child or young person attends school regularly and punctually.

Alternatively, the Local Authority may supervise a family for at least a year or until attendance improves to a satisfactory level, under the terms of an Education Supervision Order. Penalty Notices for poor attendance are issued in accordance with [Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct](#).

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.

- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £80 to be paid within 28 days, this will rise to £160 if paid after the 21 days, but within 28 days of the penalty being issued. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

### **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness**

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct, when:

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

Ultimately, the parent/carer of a student/young person who frequently arrives late at school can be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court under the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure their child attends regularly.

## **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.

Failure by the parent, school, or local authority to keep to the terms of the attendance contract cannot lead to action for breach of contract or for civil damages. There is no criminal sanction for a parent's failure to comply with, or refusal to sign, an attendance contract. If the student's irregular attendance continues or escalates to the point where prosecution is deemed appropriate, however, any failure or refusal may be presented as evidence in the case. It is therefore important that any non-compliance with the contract is recorded so that it can be presented in court if necessary.

### **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 to: TBC

## 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 I: Attendance Codes

Attendance		
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present AM	Students are present at morning registration.
\	Present PM	Students are present at afternoon registration.
L	Late	Students arrive late before the register has closed.
B	Offsite Educational Activity	Students are at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school.
D	Dual Registered	Students are attending a session at another setting where they are also registered.
J	Interview	Students have an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment.
P	Sporting Activity	Students are participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school.
V	Education Trip or Visit	Students are on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school.
W	Work Experience	Student is on a work experience placement.
Authorised Absence		
C	Authorised Leave of Absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.
E	Excluded	Students have been excluded but no alternative provision has been made.
H	Authorised Holiday	Students have been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances.
I	Illness IO2 – General IO2 – Covid related	IO1- School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness. IO2- Tested positive for covid.
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	. The student is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered student, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under

		section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site). A student attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead. 292. Schools must also record the nature of the provision (regulation 10(5)), examples are: • attending courses at college; • attending unregistered alternative provision such as, home tutoring. 293. Schools should ensure that the arrangements are in place whereby the provider notifies the school of any absence by the student. The school must record the student's absence using the relevant absence code. 294. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.
<b>M</b>	Medical or Dental Appointment	Students are at a medical or dental appointment.
<b>R</b>	Religious Observant	Students are taking part in a day of religious observance.
<b>S</b>	Study Leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their GCSEs
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Absence	Students from a Traveller community are travelling, as agreed with the school. If the attendance is a concern, the school will request for evidence to be submitted.
<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised Holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school.
<b>N</b>	Reason not Provided	Students is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when reason emerges)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised Absence	School is not satisfied with the reason for the student's absence.
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Students arrived at school after the register closed.
<b>Administrative Codes</b>		
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school.	Students of non-compulsory school age are not required to attend.
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed (to either whole school or individual year groups), there is disruption to travel or the student is in custody.
<b>Z</b>	Student not an admission register	Register set up but the student has not yet joined the school.
<b>#</b>	Planned School Closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day.

## 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 have the ER1 form printed/downloaded so this can be sent to the Attendance office. You only need to mark the students who are absent. Please ensure all of the information is completed on the form i.e. class code, staff code, date.

Tier	Number of Errors	Consequence	Examples of Errors
------	------------------	-------------	--------------------

<b>1</b>	3	Email from Attendance with Attendance Lead cc'd in. Attendance Lead to informally meet with MoS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking a register late</li> <li>• Not taking a register</li> <li>• Marking a student present when absent</li> <li>• Marking a student absent when present</li> <li>• Not updating a register with a late mark when a student arrives late to your lesson.</li> <li>• Not informing the attendance team that a student is attending intervention.</li> <li>• Entering the wrong code.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	5	Attendance Lead to meet with Line Manager.	
<b>3</b>	8	Meeting with Headteacher	

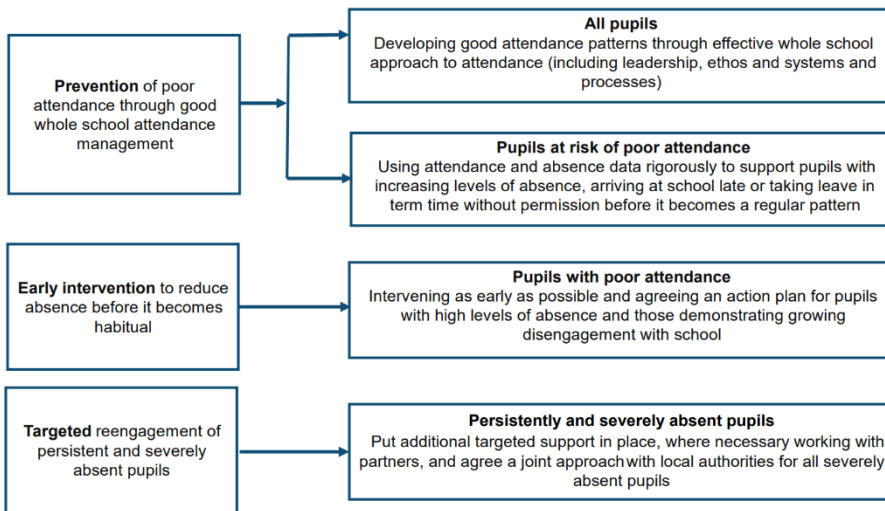
### Appendix 3: Leave of Absence Request Form

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

<b>Expect</b>	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
<b>Monitor</b>	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.
<b>Listen and Understand</b>	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.
<b>Facilitate Support</b>	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.
<b>Formalise Support</b>	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.
<b>Enforce</b>	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

