



LEEDS CHILDREN'S SERVICES

HIGHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR SCHOOLS

Academic Year 2026-27

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Should any organisations outside of the Leeds Local Authority incorporate large sections of this policy without alteration please make acknowledgement of this.

Reviewed and Approved at the Autumn 2026 Full Governing Body Committee

Next review: Autumn 2027

Signed:	<i>Joanna Kempston</i>	(Attendance Governor)
	<i>Oliver Thorne</i>	(Chair of the Governing Body)
	<i>Jonathan Feeley</i>	(Headteacher)

Highfield Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.



Contents

1. CONTACT DETAILS
2. POLICY STATEMENT
3. AIMS OF THE POLICY
4. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE
5. PARTNERSHIP EXPECTATIONS
6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
7. PERSISTENT AND SEVERE ABSENCE
8. ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES
9. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE
10. ATTENDANCE CODING AND REGISTER EXPECTATIONS
11. CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)



Academic year	Headteacher/Principal	Senior Attendance Champion (SLT)	Nominated Governor Attendance	Chair of Governors
2026-27	Jonathan Feeley	Helen Calvert	Joanna Kempston	Oliver Thorne

Policy Review date	Date Ratified by governors	Date Shared with staff
Autumn 2027	13 th October 2026	Autumn 2026

School Name	Highfield Primary School
Attendance Target	97%
School opens at	8:55am
Registers close at	9:00am

Attendance Policy

1. Contact details

Role / Agency	Name and role	Contact Details
Headteacher/Principal	Jonathan Feeley	head@highfield.leeds.sch.uk 0113 2930155
Senior Attendance Champion SLT	Jonathan Feeley	head@highfield.leeds.sch.uk 0113 2930155
Attendance Officer	Helen Calvert	helen.calvert@highfield.leeds.sch.uk 0113 2930155
Governor with responsibility for Attendance	Joanna Kempston	JKempston-gov@highfield.leeds.sch.uk
Chair Of Governors	Oliver Thorne	othorne-gov@highfield.leeds.sch.uk
School Office	Ann Etherington	admin@highfield.leeds.sch.uk 0113 2930155
Learning Mentor	Helen Calvert	helen.calvert@highfield.leeds.sch.uk
Learning Access School Attendance Team (SAT)	Queries relating to attendance	0113 3785994 Schoolattendanceservice@leeds.gov.uk
Learning Access Elective Home Education (EHE)	Queries around Elective Home Education	EHE@leeds.gov.uk
Learning Access Children Missing Education (CME)	Referrals for children missing education	0113 378 9686 CME@leeds.gov.uk
Education Safeguarding Team	Advice / Training / Safeguarding Audit	0113 3789685 estconsultation@leeds.gov.uk

2. Policy Statement

Highfield Primary School seeks to ensure that every pupil receives an education which enables them to reach their full potential. Good attendance is essential for attainment, wellbeing, safeguarding and wider life chances. We recognise that absence is often a symptom of wider barriers and will work with pupils, parents, carers and partners to understand and address those barriers at the earliest opportunity.

Highfield Primary School aims to work in partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure that every child can get the best out of the educational opportunities provided.

By working in partnership with parents, carers, pupils and other agencies, we aim to promote a culture where pupils can, and want to, attend school every day, on time and ready to learn.

We are committed to a whole school approach to attendance and a partnership relationship with parents and carers.

This attendance policy is part of a broader suite of safeguarding and inclusion policies and should not be viewed in isolation. Relevant policies include the Child Protection Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy and medical needs arrangements.

3. Aims

3.1 The school aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- All staff are aware of their responsibilities with respect to Attendance and understand the correlation with safeguarding.
- Parents, carers, and pupils are informed about the procedures for attendance and take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Pupils who achieve attendance and punctuality targets throughout the academic year are recognised and rewarded.
- Attendance barriers are identified early through regular data analysis and timely conversations with pupils and families.
- Support is offered first wherever appropriate, including in-school support, wider partner involvement and reasonable adjustments where required.
- Attendance processes are applied fairly and consistently, taking account of individual circumstances, safeguarding, SEND, disability, health needs and the Equality Act 2010.
- Persistent and severe absence are prioritised through targeted support, multi-agency working and escalation where support is not successful or not engaged with.

3.2 The responsibilities set out in this policy apply (as appropriate) to all members of the school community including pupils, parents, staff, and governors. It is fully incorporated into the whole school ethos and culture.

4. Legislation and guidance

Statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education statutory guidance, *Working together to improve school attendance*, updated July 2026. Schools, trusts, governing bodies and local authorities must have regard to this guidance when working to maintain high levels of school attendance.

[Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026](#)

4.2 The July 2026 update includes technical clarifications and does not introduce a change of policy. This policy therefore retains a support-first approach while strengthening clarity around accurate recording, data use, partnership working and legal intervention.

Core attendance expectations

Attendance is everyone's responsibility and should be embedded within whole-school culture, safeguarding, SEND, behaviour, pastoral support and family engagement;

- schools should build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance, and work with pupils, parents and partners to remove those barriers wherever possible
- the Senior Attendance Champion must have strategic oversight of attendance; ensure effective systems are in place and use attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts who need support early
- admission and attendance registers must be kept electronically, completed accurately and amended only in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The school will take the attendance register at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. Registers will be taken at a consistent time for all pupils and will remain open for no longer than 30 minutes
- unexplained absence must be followed up promptly and N codes must be amended to the correct code as soon as the reason is known, and within 5 school days; schools should inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker of unexplained absences where applicable
- schools should be particularly mindful of pupils whose attendance is affected by physical health, mental health, SEND, disability, caring responsibilities or other vulnerabilities, and should provide additional support and reasonable adjustments where appropriate; part-time timetables should only be used in very exceptional circumstances, be time limited, have parental agreement, be regularly reviewed and have a clear plan to return the pupil to full-time education
- schools should share required attendance information with the Local Authority and Department for Education, including relevant attendance, sickness, new pupil and deletion returns
- where voluntary support is not appropriate, has not worked or has not been engaged with, the school and Local Authority may consider formal support or statutory intervention in line with the national framework and local code of conduct

Linked national guidance

4.3 This policy should be read alongside other relevant statutory guidance, including;

[Children missing education - GOV.UK](#)

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#)

[Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#)

[Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement](#)

[Arranging Alternative Provision - guide for LAs and schools](#)

[Keeping children safe in education 2026 \(comes into force from 1 September 2026\)](#)

[Working together to safeguard children 2026](#)

[Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK](#)

[SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK](#)

Key legal duties

4.4 Key legal references include the Education Act 1996, section 444, which sets out parental responsibility for securing regular school attendance; the Education Act 1996, section 436A, which places duties on local authorities in relation to children missing education; the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, which govern admission and attendance registers; and the Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils where required.

[Education Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) - Part 6

[Education Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) - Part 3

The Education Act 1996 and associated regulations require that:

- All pupils of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- The Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school.
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session.
- The school must report to the Local Authority pupils who are absent for more than ten days without explanation.
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities.
- Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law.

5. Partnership expectations

How pupils support good attendance
That pupils attend regularly on time and ready to learn
Pupils are prepared for the day with appropriate equipment
Pupils who arrive after registration time report to the office
Pupils tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school
How parents and carers support good attendance
Ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time to fulfil their legal responsibility
Notify school on the first day of absence and provide reason for absence
Complete a request form for absence in term time for exceptional circumstances
Supply medical evidence when required
Ensure all parental and child contact details are up to date
Provide school with two emergency contact details
Speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem which may prevent their child/ren from attending
How the school will support pupils and families
A broad, balanced education
Encouragement and rewards for good attendance and punctuality at school

Prompt action when a problem has been identified
Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance
Contact with parents and carers on the first day when absence is unexplained
Liaison with officers from the Local Authority from a variety of teams to assist and support families where needed
Regular communication with parents and carers

Governor and trust oversight

Governors or trustees should receive regular attendance reports, scrutinise persistent and severe absence, challenge the impact of support and intervention, and ensure the attendance policy is reviewed annually or sooner where legislation, statutory guidance or school procedures change.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities should be understood through five shared themes: leadership and culture; data and monitoring; safeguarding and vulnerable pupils; family engagement; and escalation or statutory intervention where support has not been successful, has not been engaged with or is not appropriate.

6.1 Headteacher/Principal

The Head is responsible for:

- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance – ensuring compliance with Keeping children Safe in Education 2026. [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2026)
- Developing good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND). Ensuring compliance with Statutory Guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England December 2015 - Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions)
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance.
- Ensuring accurate completion of admission and attendance registers.
- Ensuring staff are actively working to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and whole school attendance.
- Having clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence - pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and this cohort must be made the top priority for action and support. Ensuring all staff are aware of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, Children's Social Work Services, and other statutory safeguarding partners. Often severely absent pupils have additional needs and therefore it is vital that schools ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the pupil's absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.
- Ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- Monitoring and analysing data and trends.
- Reporting to the Governing Body and Trusts the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.

- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building and modelling respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families, and other stakeholders to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Open and honest communication with staff, pupils, and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Consulting with other agencies collaborating with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Sharing information on and collaborating with other schools in the area/cluster, LAs, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming severe or persistent.
- Ensuring the school attendance policy is applied fairly and consistently and recognises the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Schools should consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

6.2 School Senior Attendance Champion SLT

The School Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Implementing the policy with the Head.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Championing and improving attendance.
- Ensuring the practice that is in place to address persistent and severe absence is robust.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Oversight of data analysis –
 - Monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues. This includes raising concerns with other agencies like children's social care and early help services which are working with families.
 - Robust school systems are in place which provide useful data at cohort, group, and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups such as:
 - children who have a social worker including looked-after children
 - young carers
 - children who are eligible for free school meals
 - children who speak English as a second language
 - children who have special educational needs and disabilities
 - Keeping the Head and all school staff informed of attendance figures and trends by providing regular reports to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.
 - Compiling attendance data for the Head, the Governing Body, and the Local Authority.
- Ensuring a positive working relationship with the School Attendance Service is fostered, including attending Attendance Targeted Support Meetings.
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents.
- If required, holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Undertaking home visits in line with school's safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Identifying pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.

- Making sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by pupils and families, implemented consistently and their impact reviewed regularly.
- Ensuring the school has a clear strategy for using attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts who need support, including pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.
- Ensuring regular analysis is undertaken at individual pupil, cohort, group, year group and whole-school level, including patterns linked to punctuality, illness, SEND, pupils with a social worker, young carers and other vulnerable groups.
- Ensuring attendance is reported to governors/trustees with sufficient detail to enable support and challenge.
- Ensuring any attendance case escalation records the support offered, the barriers identified, the pupil and parent voice, partner involvement and the impact of interventions.

6.3 Teaching staff

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by setting an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- Implementing the policy and ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently.
- Ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date.
- Reviewing class and individual attendance patterns.
- Informing the school attendance champion/line manager of any concerns.
- Emphasising with pupils the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families, and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Communicating openly and honestly with staff, pupils, and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or who are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Consulting with other agencies collaborating with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Modelling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:
 - treat pupils with dignity
 - build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
 - take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence
 - manage confidential information sensitively
 - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
 - communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being
- Rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually.

- Emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment.
- Promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate pupils to be in the classroom.
- Promote rewards and celebrate progress but continue to outline sanctions.
- Apply rewards and sanctions consistently.
- Follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence.
- Contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality.
- Review form or tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early, and help set targets.
- Periodically review practice and consistency both across and between departments.
- Proactively promote attendance practice as part of staff induction.
- Consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils.

6.4 Attendance and pastoral staff

Attendance and pastoral staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring the recording of attendance and absence data is accurate.
- Ensuring robust day-to-day processes are in place.
- Tracking and following up absence and poor punctuality (implement punctuality routines such as late gate or sign in procedures).
- Providing appropriate support and challenge to establish good registration practice.
- Conducting robust first day calling procedures including priority routines for vulnerable children including children with a social worker. If absence continues without explanation, further contact should be made to ensure safeguarding.
- Identifying any absences that are not explained for each session and contacting parents to understand why, and when the pupil will return to school.
- Where absences are recorded as unexplained, staff will input the correct code as soon as the reason is ascertained, and no later than five school days after the session. If no reason is established within five school days, the absence must be amended to code O.
- Ensuring admission and attendance registers are kept electronically, and every entry is preserved for 6 years from the date of entry.
- Ensuring any amendment to the attendance register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for amendment, the date of amendment and the name of the person making the amendment.
- Ensuring required returns are made to the Local Authority, including attendance returns, new pupil returns and deletion returns where applicable.
- Informing the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker of unexplained absences where applicable.
- Keeping parents informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance and absence record (this should be communicated to parents in an easy-to-understand format and percentage headlines should be avoided. For example, concentrate on the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning).
- Holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identifying pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and making the necessary referrals.
- Undertaking home visits is in line with safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Identifying and, where possible, mitigating potential barriers to good attendance in liaison with families and relevant support agencies.
- Implementing children missing education (CME) procedures when appropriate.

- Where pupils have additional vulnerabilities, which may require multi-agency meetings trying to arrange those meetings outside of lesson time, where possible.

7. Attendance, inclusion and reasonable adjustments

Attendance improvement should be rooted in inclusion, safeguarding and an understanding of individual need. The school will consider barriers linked to SEND, disability, mental health, medical needs, caring responsibilities, family circumstances and other vulnerabilities, and will make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 where required.

8. Persistent and severe absence

7.1 For pupils at risk of persistent absence

- Providing regular attendance reports to facilitate weekly reviews with leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads, and pupil premium leads) for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
- Initiating and overseeing the administration of absence procedures.

This should include:

- letters home
- attendance clinics
- engagement with local authorities and other external agencies and partners
- working with families and the community to identify which methods of communication work best, recognising potential barriers in hard-to-reach families and finding methods that work and are understood
- consideration as to whether further interventions are required in line with the statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures
- providing regular reports to leaders on the at-risk cohort
- providing regular reports/caseloads to local authority attendance team or independent attendance organisations to raise awareness of emerging at-risk pupils

For pupils who are persistently absent

- Developing and implementing persistent absence action plans with pupils and families which address barriers and help establish positive attendance routines.
- Identifying tailored intervention which meets the needs of the pupil.
- Leading daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and impact of support, make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consulting with school leaders (designated safeguarding, SENDco and pastoral leads) on referrals to external agencies and multi-agency assessments.
- Coordinating and contributing to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions.
- Working in partnership with School Attendance Service and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures.
- Providing regular reports to leaders on the impact of action plans and interventions.

7.2 For pupils who are severely absent

- Providing regular attendance reports to senior leaders, the Senior Attendance Champion, governors/trustees and external partners where appropriate, to ensure that severe absence remains a safeguarding and attendance priority.
- Ensuring severely absent pupils are prioritised for intensive intervention, recognising that they may be at increased risk of safeguarding concerns, social isolation, exploitation and poor educational outcomes.
- Leading regular multi-agency reviews to identify and address barriers impacting attendance
- Coordinating and overseeing individual attendance improvement plans, ensuring actions are reviewed regularly and support is adapted where required

- Working closely with pupils and families to understand barriers to attendance and secure engagement with support services.
- Liaising with school leaders (Designated Safeguarding Leads, SENDCo, pastoral leads and senior leaders) to ensure attendance concerns form part of wider safeguarding and inclusion planning.
- Working in partnership with the School Attendance Team and other agencies to coordinate support and consider the appropriate use of statutory intervention where required.
- Providing regular reports to senior leaders on the impact of interventions and progress towards improved attendance.

This should include:

- Undertaking robust home visits, welfare checks and safeguarding enquiries where concerns about a pupil's whereabouts, safety or wellbeing exist.
- Identifying and coordinating support from wider services, including Early Help, Social Care, Health Services, SEND services, alternative provision and voluntary sector partners, where appropriate.
- Arranging and chairing multi-agency meetings to review attendance, barriers, support plans and outcomes.
- Establishing daily or weekly contact arrangements with the pupil and family to monitor engagement and review progress.
- Ensuring the pupil voice and parent/carer voice are captured and reflected within attendance support plans.
- Considering whether further interventions or statutory parental responsibility measures are required in line with Working Together to Improve School Attendance and the local code of conduct.
- Reviewing whether additional support, reasonable adjustments or adaptations are required for pupils with SEND, medical needs, mental health needs or other vulnerabilities.
- Monitoring the impact of all support and interventions and escalating concerns without delay where attendance fails to improve.
- Sharing information with the Local Authority and relevant agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a coordinated response to severe absence.

9. Attendance procedures

8.1 Registration

- Registration takes place each morning at 8.55 am and each afternoon at 12:45 pm (Reception and KS1) or 1:15 pm (KS2).
- Class teachers will enter a present mark (/) on the register for each pupil present and an absent mark for any pupil that is absent.

8.2 Responding to lateness

- Pupils arriving after the register has started but before it closes will be recorded using code L. The school will actively discourage late arrival, monitor patterns of lateness and work with families to address barriers to punctuality.
- After the register has closed, the pupil will be recorded as absent using code U, unless another absence code is more appropriate. The register should close at the same point for every session and must not remain open for more than 30 minutes.
- Parents/carers will be contacted by school if their child is persistently late.

8.3 Responding to absence

- Repeated absences will lead to detailed monitoring by the school attendance staff.
- Targets for improvement will be clear and communicated to pupil and parent or carer.
- School will organise support to remove barriers to regular attendance.

- School will organise meetings with parents or carers to review and improve attendance.
- If attendance does not improve, or where support is not appropriate or not engaged with, the school may work with the Local Authority to consider formal support or statutory intervention. This may include an attendance contract, Education Supervision Order, Notice to Improve, penalty notice or prosecution, depending on the individual circumstances and in line with the local code of conduct.

First day response processes will be followed where a reason for absence has not been provided. If absence continues without explanation, further contact will be made to ensure safeguarding.

Parents and carers will be kept informed about attendance in an understandable way, including the amount of learning time missed and the impact on the pupil's education, rather than relying only on headline percentages.

Where a pupil has had, or is likely to have, 15 days of absence because of illness, whether consecutive or cumulative in the school year, the school will make the required sickness return to the Local Authority and consider whether additional support, medical needs planning or alternative provision arrangements are required. Where a pupil is persistently or severely absent, the school will meet with the pupil and family, identify barriers, agree actions, review impact and involve wider partners where needed.

Remote education will only be considered in limited circumstances, as a last resort, and where it forms part of a planned, time-limited reintegration strategy back into full-time attendance. It should not be used as a substitute for addressing barriers to attendance or for securing suitable in-person education wherever this is possible.

Part-time timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, following careful consideration of the pupil's needs, safeguarding risks and right to full-time education. Any part-time timetable must have parental agreement, be time-limited, include clear review dates, record the education and supervision arrangements for missed sessions, and form part of a planned route back to full-time attendance.

8.4 Working with the Local Authority's School Attendance Team

- School works in partnership with Leeds City Council's School Attendance Team to promote a strategic, support-first approach to attendance. This includes advice, Attendance Collaboration Meetings, Targeting Support Meetings, data-led discussion, support for persistent and severe absence, and legal intervention where voluntary support has not been successful, has not been engaged with, or is not appropriate.
- The Headteacher/Principal, Senior Attendance Champion and relevant attendance or pastoral staff will engage with the School Attendance Team when required to discuss attendance data, emerging concerns, pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence, and pupils who require additional or multi-agency support.
- School action plans will be developed and reviewed for pupils who are persistently or severely absent, with clear actions, named leads, family and pupil voice, support offered, review dates and escalation routes.
- If parents/carers do not proactively engage with support, or where support is not appropriate or has not been successful, formal support or statutory intervention may be considered in partnership with the Local Authority and in line with Working together to improve school attendance and the local code of conduct.

Formal support and statutory intervention can include:

- Attendance contracts, which are written agreements between the parent and the school and/or Local Authority to formalise support and expectations.
- Education Supervision Orders, where formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution is considered appropriate.

- Notices to Improve, where support is appropriate but has not worked or has not been engaged with, and a final opportunity is required before a penalty notice.
- Penalty Notices, issued in line with the National Framework and local code of conduct.
- Prosecution under section 444 Education Act 1996, where all other routes have failed or are not appropriate.
- Parenting Orders, where ordered by the court following conviction.

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Schools must consider each case individually and should not apply a blanket approach. A first penalty notice is £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period is £160 with no reduced rate. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within that 3-year period, and alternative action should be considered.

10. Authorised and unauthorised absence

9.1 Authorised absence

Authorised absence is defined as:

- Genuine illness
- Medical or dental appointment (where possible routine appointments should be arranged out of school time)
- Bereavement (Headteacher's discretion)
- Religious observance (The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong)
- Approved leave in term time where there are exceptional circumstances, as agreed by the Headteacher.
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance, and the school has granted leave of absence

9.2 Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is defined as:

- Being late after the registers have closed 'U' code
- Staying at home to care for younger children or sick relatives
- Going shopping or having a haircut
- Where no explanation is offered by the parent or carer
- Where the school is not satisfied with an explanation offered
- Special occasions e.g., birthdays/weddings
- Holidays/leave in term time
- Taking the rest of the day off before or after a medical appointment
- Translating for family members
- Visiting sick relatives
- Exceptional term time leave longer than agreed by the Headteacher

11. Attendance coding and register expectations

Accurate attendance coding is essential for safeguarding, early intervention, data analysis and statutory processes. The school will use the national codes set out in Working together to improve school attendance and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Where the school is unsure which code should be used, advice should be sought from the School Attendance Team or the relevant DfE guidance before the register is amended.

Code / area	2026/27 policy reminder	Action for school
N	Reason for absence not yet established. Must not remain indefinitely.	Follow up promptly and amend to the correct code within 5 school days. If no reason is established, amend to O.
B	Approved educational activity arranged by the school. The activity must be educational, approved and supervised appropriately.	Record the nature of the activity and ensure safeguarding arrangements and absence reporting are in place.
K	Education provision arranged by the Local Authority.	Use where the pupil is attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority, for example under section 19 or relevant SEND arrangements.
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.	Only grant where exceptional circumstances apply and the request is considered individually.
C1	Leave for regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.	Check licence/BOPA arrangements and record accurately.
C2	Compulsory school age pupil subject to a temporary part-time timetable.	Use only where exceptional, agreed, time limited, reviewed regularly and linked to a clear plan for full-time education.
Q	Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements.	Use only in the specific circumstances set out in regulation and guidance.
Y1-Y7	Unable to attend because of unavoidable cause, with separate codes for transport, travel disruption, site closure, public health and other unavoidable causes.	Use the most specific Y code and record the reason. Y7 should only be used where another Y code does not apply.
I	Illness, including physical or mental health related illness.	Do not routinely request medical evidence. Request reasonable evidence only where clarification is needed to record the absence accurately.
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made.	Use only where the pupil is still on roll and no alternative provision is in place for that session.

12. Children Missing Education (CME)

[Children missing education - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/children-missing-from-school)

A child who is absent from school and/or missing from education may be an indicator of safeguarding risk, abuse or neglect. The school will follow Children Missing Education statutory guidance and Leeds Children's Services procedures. Where a pupil meets the relevant notification requirements, the school will inform the Local Authority without delay, continue to make reasonable enquiries as appropriate and will not remove a pupil from roll unless one of the lawful grounds in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies. 3789686.