Attendance Policy September 2025
Name of Academy: Hotwells Primary School

Cathedral Schools Trust

It is the responsibility of all Cathedral Schools Trust employees and volunteers to familiarise themselves with the contents of all Trust policies and any amendments hereafter.

Changes

Version	Date	Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1	10 December 2020	CST Trustees	Members of CST, every Trustee, each Local Governor, all Cathedral Schools Trust employees and volunteers and others at the discretion of the Chairman of the Trustees of CST. CST Website updated.	Annual Review - no changes whilst CST carry out a whole Trust Attendance Review
2	05 May 2021	CST Trustees		Review - This policy forms the overarching policy for attendance at CST schools. In addition, appendix 2 is a template for the individual CST school to complete with specific details of contacts and processes etc tailored to the setting as relevant.
3	26th September 2024	CST Trustees		Annual Review
4	9th October 2025	CST Trustees		Annual Review

Alterations

This Scheme may be altered, added to or repealed by a majority resolution of the Trustees of CST in a general meeting.

CATHEDRAL SCHOOLS TRUST

Approvals

Version	Date	Approved by
1	4 December 2017	CST Trustees
2	10 December 2020	CST Trustees
3	05 May 2021	CST Trustees
4	26 September 2024	CST Trustees
5	9th October 2025	CST Trustees

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Key Contacts for Hotwells Primary School

- The name of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance is Matt Edwards, Assistant Headteacher and Attendance Lead.
- If you have a concern about your child's attendance, parents and carers should contact the school office in the first instance.

- If your child is going to be absent from school for a day you must call the school office on 0117 9030044 and leave a message. Alternatively, report the absence through the Arbor Parent Portal APP, go to the home page of the Arbor app. Click on the *Quick Actions* button and then click *Attendance*

From here click the green Log Absence button in the top-right of the page. -

Please input a start and end time for the absence and type in the reason for the absence giving as much detail as possible.

- If a message is left for the school, the school may contact parents or carers to gain a better understanding of the absence.

- For safeguarding reasons, our schools will contact parents and carers or their emergency contacts to check on any unexplained absences. If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, the school may conduct a home visit or request a Welfare Check from the police.

CATHEDRAL SCHOOLS TRUST

Part A - Policy:

1. Introduction

It is the aim of Cathedral Schools Trust that pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and is an integral part of our schools.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with them, their parents and carers and partner organisations to remove barriers, by building strong and trusting relationships. Therefore, improving attendance is everyone's business.

The principals of a 'support first approach' are adopted and we seek to:

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

Enforce	Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

2. Aims

Cathedral Schools Trust's aim is to meet their obligations with regard to school attendance by ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time, efficient education to which they are entitled; acting early to address patterns of absence and creating a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood and valued by all parties.

This policy sets out our Trusts position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents[1] must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, taking into account the individual needs of our pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Therefore, in the development of our policy we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the school will encourage parents of Nursery and Reception children who are not yet of compulsory school age, to send their children to every session that is available to them. If the child is unable to attend the school for any reason, the parent should inform the school of the reason on the first day of absence. If the school is concerned about a pupil's attendance for any reason, we will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our pupils to go to school every day unless they are really not well enough to attend. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school,

[1] Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality is essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can, for any pupil who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition.

Please see DfE guidance documents 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015', 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013' and Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community.
- Raise our pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, pupils and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality.

2.1. Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days' absence, can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate number of lessons missed

95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

3. Safeguarding and Attendance

Our schools will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025 version, or as updated by the DfE) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare.

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the government guidance 2024 Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures. These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2024

The DfE's guidance on the school census explains the persistent absence threshold.

5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. At Cathedral Schools Trust, our schools track and monitor the attendance data for all pupils.

Persistent and severe absence

The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

At Cathedral Schools Trust our schools will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing and enhance their understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

At Cathedral Schools Trust we will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

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.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and will put reasonable additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Reduced timetable will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period to support pupils to reintegrate back into education to access full time provision.

Cathedral Schools Trust is committed to sharing information and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

7. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. Cathedral Schools Trust will therefore facilitate training for all staff to understand

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers
- the school/trusts' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
- and the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include

- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data,
- and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

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Part B - What the Law Says and Our School Procedures:

1. Contents of the Admissions Register

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or readmission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason is set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date, they are a legal document. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

2. Contents of Attendance Register

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil. Please refer to Working Together To Improve School Attendance for the code descriptors and also appendix 1 of this document. The school must record whether each pupil is:

- Attending
- Absent

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to safeguard children, improve attendance and is supported by the use of our electronic Management Information System to record attendance information. Our registers will be preserved for 6 years from the date after the last entry was made.

Attendance and absence codes

3. Attending the School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present (/ \) if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

Each school has a designated Attendance Lead or Attendance officer who will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (L) – which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. See DfE guidance Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Details of individual schools' registration periods can be found in Appendix 2.

3.1. Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a child arrives late to school, they miss important parts of the day including assemblies, tutor time, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

4. Attending a place other than the school

Pupils are marked as attending a place other than the school if they are present for the assigned session. These codes include:

- Code K Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip
- Code P: Participating in a sporting activity
- Code W: Attending work experience
- Code B: Attending any other approved education activity
- Code D: Dual registered at another setting

Our schools retain responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. Schools must be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Schools should ensure that we have in place arrangements whereby providers notify the school of any absence. Our schools must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our schools will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider arranged by the school, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions in which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (any other approved educational activity). Our schools expect the alternative provider (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a weekly basis, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting. Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the Alternative Provider (AP).

5. Absent – Leave of absence

A leave of absence means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence' which means the pupil's absence is with permission granted by the school. These codes include:

- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

5.1. Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card, letter or text – only then will the absence be authorised.

5.2. Part-time timetables - Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our schools are unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

5.3. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. Our schools will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request

must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. Cathedral Schools Trust schools will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which may be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the individual school or on their website. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least four weeks before the absence. Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing. Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our Trust Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with the Social Care and The HOPE Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact the HOPE Virtual School in relation to any requests for term time absence for a child in care.

6. Absent – other authorised reasons

Absent due to other authorised reasons means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence'. These codes include:

- Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

6.1. Mobile pupil - Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Cathedral Schools Trust will authorise the absence of a mobile pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

6.2. Religious Observance

Cathedral Schools Trust acknowledges the multi-faith nature of our school communities and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, Cathedral Schools Trust schools will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be necessary, they should be requested in advance using the leave of absence in the term-time process. Additional days taken without exceptional circumstances, will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

6.3. Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence, we will endeavour to have a

conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have not been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing should contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or SENDCO for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

6.4. Exclusions

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions.

Any exclusion must be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the HOPE Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

7. Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our schools will record pupils as 'Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences and are not counted as possible attendances):

- Code Q: Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
- Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

8. Absent - unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or no reason for absence was provided.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Time off for shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions. The unauthorised absence codes include:

- Code G – Holiday not granted by the school
- Code N – Reason for absence not yet established
- Code O – Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- Code U – Arrived in school after registration closed

9. Administrative codes

Where necessary and applicable, our schools will use the defined administrative codes. These codes are not collected for statistical purposes and are:

- Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admissions register
- Code #: Planned whole school closure

10. First Day of Absence Response

If your child is unable to attend school, you must inform the school as soon as possible to explain the absence. Details of how to do this can be found in Appendix 2.

If a pupil is not in school and no explanation has been provided for their absence, the school will seek to find a reason for the absence through calling or texting those listed as emergency contacts for the pupil. Parents and carers will be asked to supply details of at least three people who can be contacted in an emergency.

If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we may undertake our own 'safe and well' checks and/or request a Welfare Check from the police.

11. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

Each academy has a range of strategies available to support parents/carers and pupils in getting into school and improving school attendance. (See appendix 2)

Each of our school's reward systems and strategies has been carefully considered to ensure it does not make pupils who have poor attendance, through no fault of their own, feel marginalised, worried or guilty about their low attendance rate and its impact on the pupil's own learning or the learning or rewards for the class as a whole.

12. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. Our schools need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with Attendance Lead to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

If the school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a Notice to Improve – attendance warning letter.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

13. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

A pupil's unauthorised absence from school could result in one of the following:

1. A Penalty Notice. The penalty is £80 per parent, per child payable within 21 days, rising to £160 per parent, per child if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.) If a second Penalty Notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period the penalty is £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. There will be no option to pay a lower amount.
2. Prosecution.

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or up to 3 months imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibility measures for more information and Bristol City Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, available here: https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-

years/education-welfare and North Somerset's here: https://n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/schools-learning/local-schools/school-attendance/school-absence#:~:text=What%20we%20do,remain%20unpaid%20we%20can%20prosecute.

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

In addition to Penalty Notices, there is a range of other legal interventions open to schools

Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family.

These are:

· Parenting contracts

· Education supervision orders

· Attendance prosecution

· Parenting orders

· Fixed penalty notices

14. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our schools will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason is set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The school will follow local authority guidance on Children Missing Education, and make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Officer if unsure about any individual cases.

15. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made about an absence, the school will contact parents by text, email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 5 school days, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the O code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts.

16. Reporting to Parents

At Cathedral Schools Trust we will report to all parents at least three times a year on their child's attendance. This will be through parents evenings and end of year reports. Where a child's attendance begins to be of a concern, we will contact you to discuss and offer support.

Persistent Absence - Where a child's attendance drops below 90%, for whatever reason, our schools will write to the parents to highlight this. Schools will work with pupils and parents to address the reasons for persistent absences.

17. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

Reasons that are provided by parents and carers for an absence are added to our data systems and kept on file. Schools will also add when phone calls or text messages are sent and not responded to.

18. Roles and Responsibilities

At Cathedral Schools Trust we believe that Attendance is everyone's responsibility. Any member of staff may speak to you about your child's attendance in order to be supportive or encourage improved attendance.

Attendance Lead - Each school will have a named Attendance Lead who is a Senior Leader with responsibility for whole school attendance. They will be responsible for reporting attendance to the Headteacher. They will also work with other senior leaders, class teachers/tutors, the SENDCO, Attendance Officers and Pastoral support staff to ensure that the attendance for all children is tracked,

monitored and that children who are in danger of becoming persistently absent are supported in returning to school.

The Headteacher - The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across our schools, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Attendance and Safeguarding Lead - The trust will have a person in post who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of Cathedral Schools Trust attendance policies and procedures. They will be responsible for reporting on all schools attendance data to Trustees.

The Governing Board and Trustees

The governing board for individual schools is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis (6 times a year). It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Attendance Data for all schools within the Trust will be reported to Trustees on a termly basis and will ensure that Governing Boards and Headteachers are acting swiftly to address any attendance concerns within individual schools.

19. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Attendance and Safeguarding Lead, or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with Trustees.

20. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to other CST policies named below which can be found here:

- CST Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Special Education Needs and Disability
- Behaviour Policy

Guidance Documents (include but are not limited to):

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE 2024)

Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school

Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's attendance (DfE February 2023)

Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Arranging education for children with who cannot attend school because of health needs (DfE December 2023)

Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Keeping children safe in education (DfE September 2025)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE January 2015)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance

School census guidance and regulation

https://www.gov.uk/education/school-censuses-and-slasc

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion

Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE July 2014)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance

Children Missing Education Guidance (Bristol City Council January 2018)

https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/children-missing-education-cme

Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (Bristol City Council)

https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare

North Somerset Council Guidance on School Attendance

https://n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/schools-learning/local-schools/school-attendance

CATHEDRAL SCHOOLS TRUST

Appendix 1 – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance & Absence Codes

Attending	
/\	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure