



Attendance Policy

Town Lane Infant School

VERSION 1.0

CONCORDIA MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

2024

Table of Contents

1. Document Control	4
Amendment History	4
Review Dates	4
Author(s)	4
Reviewer(s)	4
Approver(s)	4
2. Introduction and Aim	5
3. Legislation	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4. Registers	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5. Procedure	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6. What can parents/carers do to help and working in partnership with Parents/Carers?	Error! Bookmark not defined.
7. Absence Monitoring	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Early Identification and Intervention: assess, plan, do and review	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Medical Absence	Error! Bookmark not defined.
8. Lateness and Punctuality	Error! Bookmark not defined.
9. Unauthorised Absence and Fixed Penalty Notice	Error! Bookmark not defined.
10. Promoting and Incentivising Attendance	Error! Bookmark not defined.
11. Application for Exceptional Circumstances	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Religious Observance	Error! Bookmark not defined.
12. Enforced School Closure	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Impact	Error! Bookmark not defined.
13. Appendix 1	Error! Bookmark not defined.
14. Appendix 2 - What does 'percentage attendance' mean?	Error! Bookmark not defined.
15. Appendix 3 - Absence Codes:	5
According to the DfE guidance the following codes are used on the register. New Attendance Codes from 19 th August 2024	Error! Bookmark not defined.

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This policy will be reviewed annually by School and the Local Authority and updated in accordance with any new legislation or guidance, or changes to any other relevant procedures or documents. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Authority's policies on Enforcement Procedures, Children Missing from Education, and Elective Home Education.

1. Document Control

Amendment History

Version No.	Date	Comments
1.0	Sept 2024	New Trust policy based on LA template

Review Dates

Next Review Date
September 2025

Author(s)

Name	Role
Wirral LA	Children and Young People's Department (original author)
Tracy Webb	Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (small edits)

Reviewer(s)

Name	Role
Sara Lawrenson	Director of Education (DOE)

Approver(s)

Name	Role
Tracy Webb	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

2. Introduction and Aim

Concordia Multi Academy Trust recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, 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 the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called “[Working together to improve school attendance](#)” and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:
promote children’s welfare and safeguarding;

- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school;
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school’s commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE’s statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

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

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the Headteacher, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

3. Promoting Regular School Attendance

The need for **regular school attendance** is given a high priority by all Wirral schools.

The Supreme Court ruled in April 2017 (Platt v Isle of Wight) that **regular** attendance is '**in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school**'. In Wirral Schools, this is interpreted as **every day that the school requires a child to attend, unless the absence has been approved by the Headteacher**.

At Concordia Multi Academy Trust we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion (the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school) is:

Name K Large

Email address or contact details schooloffice@townlane-infant.wirral.sch.uk

A member of our Local Academy Board monitors attendance.

Leigh Horner Behaviour and Attitudes link governor

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- ◁ Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- ◁ Share attendance information with the Local Authority;
- ◁ Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- ◁ Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters;
- ◁ Promote the benefits of high attendance;
- ◁ Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law;
- ◁ Celebrate excellent attendance
- ◁ Celebrate good or improving attendance;
- ◁ Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress;
- ◁ Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.

Unsurprisingly, children who are absent from school or who are persistently late, can soon fall behind with their learning. Research conducted by the Department for Education (DfE 2016) confirmed that, as the level of overall pupil absence increases, the likelihood of pupils achieving what they are capable of decreases.

Parents of children of compulsory school age are, by law, required to ensure that their children receive a suitable education through regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Definition of 'Parent'

For the purposes of this policy and other education related issues, a **parent** is as defined under section 576 of the Education Act 1996:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of their relationship with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

Attendance in Early Years

Children must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March, or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first. If a child's fifth birthday is on one of those dates, then they reach compulsory school age on that date.

Following the introduction of Working Together to Improve School Attendance, schools must use nationally prescribed registration codes for all sessions that a non-compulsory school aged child is required to attend, as to do so will help staff to monitor attendance and to be alert to any emerging patterns of absence that may be an indicator of wider concern. There should be high expectations in place for this cohort of children in terms of attendance, so that good habits are established from the outset of a child's school career.

Understanding types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session;
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- day trips;
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling (19 days) across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this. All pupils who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be a persistent absentee.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling (95 days) is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**'. Pupils within this cohort 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.

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

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, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils, however we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

4. Expectations to ensure delivery of this Policy across all Wirral Schools

Responsibilities & Expectations of Parents and Carers:

- To ensure that their child attends school every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine and unavoidable reason that prevents them from so doing;
- To ensure that their child arrives at school 8.40-8.50am. A reason should be offered for any lateness;
- To inform school as soon as possible, by 'phone or in person, if their child is unable to attend on any day, together with the reason for absence 01516081918.
- To trust that school staff will contact them during the school day if a child is ill in school and needs to go home;
- To ensure that school has at least two sets of full contact details, and that these are kept updated;
- To make all medical appointments outside school hours whenever possible, and to inform school in advance of any medical appointments that cannot be scheduled out of school time. For absence to be authorised as a medical absence, schools do require evidence, such as an appointment card or letter;
- In the case of a primary school child, to ensure that their child is collected on time at the end of the school day;
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods, and to be aware that there is no entitlement to withdraw children for authorised leave of absence during term time. Any requests for leave of absence during term time should be made in writing and in advance to the head teacher; *form available from school office.*
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and to be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during particularly important times such as SATs, GCSEs, and other exam periods;
- To provide evidence and advice from a health professional when needed to enable school to gain a greater understanding of their child's health issues;
- To talk to school staff as soon as possible should their child be reluctant to come to school for any reason, or if there are any other issues impacting on school attendance. This is so that any barriers to attendance can be quickly identified and overcome. In most cases the first point of contact should be the child's class teacher, form tutor or the Attendance Officer within the school

Absence Procedures:

It is important that parents / carers keep in touch with school about all absences. This information is used to help determine whether children's absence is recorded in the register as authorised or unauthorised. The head teacher has the ultimate authority to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised. If parents do not communicate with school, and staff are unable to establish contact, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Medical Evidence:

The most common reason for children being persistently absent from school is illness. When pupils are having repeat absences due to reported illness, schools may need more evidence and advice to help decide whether or not the absence should be authorised, and to see whether any additional support is required. Children can be reluctant to attend school from time to time, or there may be other issues affecting attendance. It is never advisable for parents to 'cover' for their absence or to give-in to pressure to excuse them from attending. Covering up gives the impression that attendance does not matter, and usually makes things worse. It is always better to get in touch with school, to share concerns, and to plan a way forward.

Schools can accept the following as medical evidence:

- GP certificate
- Letter from health professional

- ⌚ Appointment card / letter (dated)
- ⌚ Prescription / Medication in the name of the child
- ⌚ Text message from GP or NHS confirming an appointment
- ⌚ Care of the chemist – date stamped slip to show medical advice has been sought

In situations where a child's attendance record is of concern, usual practice would be for parents / carers to be invited into school to meet with an appropriate member of staff. This provides an opportunity for concerns from both home and school to be shared, and for an agreed plan of action to be put in place to address any identified difficulties.

Please remember that parents and carers are encouraged to contact school at an early point should they have any concerns that are impacting on their child's school attendance.

We acknowledge that children are at a higher risk of missing school if they have issues around their emotional wellbeing and mental health. This can then lead to further problems in terms of children falling behind with work, and of feelings of social isolation. It is particularly important in these circumstances that parents / carers work together with school to ensure that appropriate help and support is offered to respond to concerns as they arise. Early Help means taking action to support a child, young person, or/and their family as soon as a problem emerges. School may also seek advice about sources of help and support from the Authority's Vulnerable Children's Panel in cases where concerns about a child's unauthorised absence are ongoing. Parents may also wish to use Family Toolbox <https://familytoolbox.co.uk/> to identify possible sources of support or encourage their child to access Zillo <https://www.zillowirral.co.uk/>

5. School Responsibilities

- To demonstrate a strong and inclusive whole school attendance ethos that helps pupils feel that they 'belong'.
- To promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers at every opportunity (via newsletters, assemblies, and any other communications between school and home).
- To establish effective procedures that enable staff to record, identify, and address concerns around overall pupil absence.
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences using the correct DfE prescribed registration code (see Appendix 1). This duty also extends to ensuring that N coded absences are resolved in a timely manner. Parents should be made aware that if school cannot establish an acceptable reason for their child's absence, the missed sessions will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- To have sensitive support systems in place for vulnerable pupils which recognise the complexity of children's lives and family circumstances.
- To inform the local authority of any part-time or flexible education arrangements in place for individual pupils, together with plans for tracking and review (See Appendix 11).
- To identify a senior leader who has overall responsibility for attendance, and who is also responsible for the achievement and wellbeing of all children who are on the school roll, but not accessing education in the usual way, such as those pupils in alternative provision placements. The senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs K Large and they can be contacted via the school office.
- To encourage open communication channels and partnership working between home and school to improve attendance and punctuality. This will include meetings with parents and carers in school, where any support needs can be identified and addressed, together with the joint formulation of realistic plans for improving individual pupils' attendance.
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees. In addition, school must have plans in place to support each persistently absent pupil and each severely absent pupil.
- To have support plans in place to ease pupils' transition between each phase of education when there is a change of school, with particular reference to the needs of more vulnerable children.
- To seek advice from the Authority's designated Locality Attendance Officer (LAO) both in respect of the management of whole school attendance matters, and of individual children whose attendance gives cause concern.
- To have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school and other support agencies in relation to the provision of additional support for pupils whose attendance difficulties are symptomatic of wider family issues or / and indicative of safeguarding concerns where a multi-agency response is required seeking advice from the allocated Early Help worker as and when needed.
- To refer children into the Authority's Vulnerable Children's Panel for advice and support in situations where parents are reluctant to engage voluntarily with early help, and concerns about unauthorised absence are ongoing. Parents should be made aware that this will be the case.
- To engage in partnership working with the Authority's Attendance Service to ensure appropriate use of legal sanctions in order to reinforce parental responsibility for securing regular attendance.
- To analyse and evaluate a range of accurate attendance data to improve individual pupil and whole school performance, and to identify any vulnerable groups of pupils whose attendance is below what would be expected. There should be robust tracking procedures in place with respect to the attendance of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, children in receipt of Pupil Premium, and children who are Looked After by the Authority or have an allocated Social Worker.
- To incentivise, reward and celebrate good and improved attendance on an individual, group, and whole school level – creating a positive culture in which good and improved attendance is highly valued.
- To provide the Local Academy Board with sufficient data and information about pupils who are not attending regularly or accessing education in the usual way, so that they can evaluate and challenge the effectiveness of school's arrangements.

- To refer children who are, or who are at risk of becoming, Children Missing from Education (CME) to the Local Authority in accordance with Wirral Policy.
- To notify the Local Authority of any child whose name is deleted from roll at parental request in order to pursue elective home education.

Expectations of School Staff:

First Day Contact

Parents should be encouraged to contact school on each morning that their child is absent. If a child is absent, and no contact from parent has been received by school:

- School will endeavour to telephone parents/carers to ascertain a reason for absence in accordance with 'first day contact' procedures.
- School may also telephone any other persons on the pupil's contact list if they are unable to make contact with the parent.
- Home welfare visits may also be undertaken in connection with concerns around a child's absence (particularly when parents do not respond to requests for contact from school staff).
- Priority tracking should take place where safeguarding is a known issue. School's Designated Safeguarding Lead / Children Looked After Lead should be alerted should there be any concerns in respect of the absence of children subject of Child In Need arrangements or Child Protection Plans, or children Looked After by the Local Authority.

The Attendance Admin Team are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Making first day response calls to parents of absent children where no contact has been received.
- Informing the Attendance Lead / Designated Safeguarding Lead of any cases where the explanation for absence gives potential cause for concern, and where additional support or intervention may be required.
- Recording details of children who arrive late.
- Sending out letters and emails to parents regarding attendance concerns.
- Administration work around school Attendance Panels (which can also involve the Authority's Locality Attendance Officer).
- Reporting daily and weekly attendance figures.
- Keeping an overview of whole school, class, and individual attendance rates, looking particularly at overall absence, levels of unauthorised absence, and patterns of absence.

Expectations of the Local Authority and Wirral Attendance Service

The Local Authority is expected:

- To promote regular school attendance of children in schools across the Authority, and to work towards breaking the cycle of poor attendance, reduced attainment, and social disadvantage.
- To meet, at least termly, with attendance staff within school.
- To help schools in their work to reduce overall, persistent and severe pupil absence. This involves working with school staff, parents / carers, children, and various partner agencies to develop and implement practices which can help raise and sustain individual pupils' attendance levels.
- To carry out statutory duties in relation to the enforcement of school attendance.

- To carry out statutory duties in respect of the identification and tracking of children known to be, or at risk of becoming, missing from education (CME).

Tables of responsibilities for school attendance can be found at: [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Locality Attendance Officers, employed by the Local Authority, work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court

Link with Safeguarding / Education Neglect

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Schools have a key role in ensuring children and young people are kept safe. School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.
- Every school has a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and can liaise closely with other services such as children's social care and early help services.
- Schools should be alert to unauthorised absence as being a potential indicator of educational or wider neglect. Neglect is the most common reason for a child to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan in the UK.
- **Working Together 2020** identifies neglect as:
- 'The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Stepped Interventions

The following are examples of interventions which may be considered by schools to support the promotion of regular attendance:

97% - 95%	Early Warning	Early awareness raising, monitored by class teachers
95% - 92%	School Monitoring	Concern escalated to senior staff
92% - 90%	School Intervention (stage 1)	School letter to raise awareness of Fixed Penalty process in cases of unauthorised absence, meetings with parents/carers, continued school support

90% and below	Attendance Service and School Intervention (stage 2)	Attendance Panel, Parenting Contract, Home Visits, Meeting with Locality Attendance Officer, Education Penalty Warning from LA / Penalty Notice (which could lead to prosecution)
<p>Unauthorised attendance that falls below 75% can be an underlying risk factor and indicative of a safeguarding concern. All of the above should be underpinned by the offer of ongoing support to address identified difficulties. All pupils under 50% are classed as severely absent and must have a plan to support their attendance.</p>		

Lateness

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. When children arrive late and miss the start of the school day, they can miss work and vital information for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, and this can be embarrassing and upsetting for the child. Lateness can also encourage absence, as some pupils would rather not attend school at all, than arrive late.

- Registers are marked by 8.55am. If children arrive in class after this time, they will receive a late mark in the register (code L).
- In line with recommendations from the Department for Education (DfE), registers will close at 9.15am. If children arrive after this time, they will be recorded as having arrived after closure of registers (code U). This counts as an unauthorised absence for that session.
- Any pupil arriving late should enter the school through the main entrance and be signed-in in accordance with school's procedures.
- If a primary school child arrives late and is unaccompanied by a parent/carer, school will make contact to establish the reason for lateness.
- If lateness becomes a regular occurrence, it will be treated in the same way as unauthorised absence, with parents/carers being contacted and invited into school to discuss the situation.

Children with Medical Needs

- The Local Academy Board must ensure that arrangements are in place to support pupils with medical conditions in school. Individual healthcare plans should be in place, and these should provide clarity about what needs to be done, when, and by whom in order to ensure that children with medical needs may access and enjoy the same opportunities at school as any other child (see DfE statutory guidance issued in April 2014: 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions').
- The primary aim of educating children and young people who have medical needs is to minimise, as far as possible, the disruption to their normal schooling by allowing them to continue their education and to progress as much as their medical needs allow. 'Medical needs' encompass both physical health and mental / emotional health issues.

In circumstances where a child has complex health needs and is medically unfit to attend school, referral may be made to The Home & Continuing Education Service which is a local authority service currently based at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre. Medical referrals to the Home & Continuing Education Service must come jointly from both school and an appropriate health professional.

Children on Part-Time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances where a part-time timetable is needed as a time-limited intervention to respond to a child's

individual needs. This must always be in agreement with the child's parent(s)/carer(s). Schools are required to submit information about such arrangements to Wirral Attendance Service.

Examples of when a part-time timetable may be considered are:

- ◁ Medical issue
- ◁ Emotional/Mental Health
- ◁ Family/Friendship issue
- ◁ Re-integration programme following absence
- ◁ SEND – identified/awaiting specialist placement
- ◁ SEND – unidentified/undiagnosed needs

Celebrating Good Attendance

It is important that schools recognise and celebrate good and improved attendance. This will be shared with parents. Locality Attendance Officers from the Authority's Attendance Service are happy to send positive letters to parents to recognise and reinforce progress made in terms of securing their child's attendance. School can also invite Locality Attendance Officers to be involved in celebration assemblies

Expectations of Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school and to obtain maximum benefit from the range of educational and other opportunities available to them.

Pupils are expected:

- ◁ To do all they can to attend school regularly and on time;
- ◁ To talk with a trusted adult about any issues that are making it difficult for them to come to school, or that are affecting their wellbeing in school.

6. School Attendance and the Law

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The Local Authority has a range of legal powers to promote and enforce regular school attendance:

- Penalty Notices (Section 444A Education Act 1996)
- Prosecution of Parents / Carers in Magistrates' Court (Section 444 (1) / Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996)
- Application to the Family Court for an Education Supervision Order in respect of the child (Children Act 1989)
- School Attendance Order (Section 437 Education Act 1996)
- Parenting Order (Section 8 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

Each case is considered on an individual basis, but the circumstances in which a Penalty Notice for non-attendance may be issued by the Local Authority include:

- Unauthorised absence from school
- Unauthorised leave of absence during term time
- Unwarranted delayed return from authorised leave of absence, e.g., in excess of the agreed number of days
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10 school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In

addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.”

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child’s overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (**not the local authority**) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework in respect of each parent believed to be involved in the absence.

The Local Authority retains any revenue from the Education Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs.

Non-payment of an Education Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Notice, and would normally trigger prosecution proceedings at Magistrates Court under Section 444 Education Act 1996. There is no right of appeal by parents/carers against an Education Penalty Notice.

7. Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving Town Lane Infant School, other than at the end of year 2, parents/carers are required to share the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Schools can only lawfully remove a child from their school roll under certain circumstances in accordance with Government Regulations (see Appendix 13). Schools are required to inform the Local Authority of the details of all children who are removed from roll at non-standard transition times. This is to be done by completing a deletion from roll form and submitting it via email or Anycomms to schoolattendance@wirral.gov.uk.

Elective Home Education

One of the grounds under which a child can lawfully be removed from a school roll is if a parent notifies the Headteacher in writing that they are withdrawing their child from school in order to take full responsibility for provision of the child's education. School must notify the Local Authority, as the Authority will then have responsibility for assessing the suitability of education that is being provided for the child. The Authority must first consent to elective home education when a child has special educational needs and is placed in specialist provision.

Schools and the Authority respect that it is a parental right to pursue elective home education. It is, however, important that when parents opt to home educate, this is a positive choice and in the best interests of the child, rather than the option of last resort. Parents should be aware that elective home education is not a route to obtaining a place in a school of their choice which may have previously been declined, or a way of accessing alternative provision.

Children Looked After (CLA)

The attendance of children in the care of the Local Authority is also monitored by the Headteacher and Local Academy Board of the Virtual School. Use of the B and C codes should be agreed with the Headteacher of the Virtual School. The use of the N registration code for looked after children should be rare, as reasons for any absence should be obtained as a matter of priority. It is essential that contact is made with a child's social worker and the Authority's LACES team as soon as attendance concerns emerge. Attendance staff should routinely inform school's designated teacher for looked after children of their looked after children's attendance rates.

Pupils Attending Off-Site Educational Provision

Any pupil who is attending off-site educational provision should be marked using registration code D or B by their main school (according to the circumstances of the individual placement).

Code B should be used when pupils are present at off-site educational provision that has been approved by school. School is ultimately responsible for the safeguarding of pupils educated off-site, and use of the B code signifies that the education is supervised and measures are in place to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of the pupil.

School must ensure that the B codes reflect the daily attendance of the pupil at the off-site provision. For example, if a pupil misses a day due to illness, then the main school attendance register will show this day as an I and not a B.

It is important for agreement and clarity to be reached between school and the off-site provision with respect to arrangements for daily tracking and follow-up of any absence. There should be daily communication between school and the off-site provision in respect of individual pupils' absence.

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. The D code is used to signify that the pupil was not expected to attend the session because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Again, an agreement must be in place with respect to who has responsibility for the daily tracking of attendance and absence.

Absence Data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.