



Taunton Deane
Partnership College

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Attendance Policy

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Our Ethos

We will work to the best of our abilities to ensure our children and young people are:

- Architects of their futures
- Resilient, healthy and secure
- Able to access a high-quality education
- Supported holistically

1. Introduction

Taunton Deane Partnership College comprises a number of centres providing education for children and young people who are unable to attend mainstream schooling due to social, emotional, behavioural and medical needs.

- Deane Discovery Centre
- Holway Centre
- Hospital Education Centre
- Forest School
- Online/Outreach provision

For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and are at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Regular attendance has a positive effect on motivation, engagement and attainment of pupils. Any absence whether it is from classroom learning or alternative provision may have a negative impact.

2. Aims

Our college aims to ensure that every pupil has access to the education that meets their needs and to which they are entitled to. Full time is always our aim.

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits. We want children to attend every day unless there is a good reason that they cannot. We want all our pupils to engage positively with their education and to realise their full potential. Punctuality and good attendance is also a key skill to develop as part of preparation for next steps.

The policy sets out what we expect from ourselves but also from students and parents/carers. We work hard to promote engagement and motivation but also good communication between home and ourselves.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child/young person's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child/young person's regular attendance at the college is your legal responsibility and permitting absence without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act says:

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 is guilty of an offence.

Section 7 of the Act states that:

'every parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient fulltime education suitable to his /her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he /she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'

3. Safeguarding and attendance

TDPC 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 (2024 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. (Please see our safeguarding policy for more information).

4. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the 2019 school attendance guidance, 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 (as amended)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2012 and 2013)

The law states that all schools must take an attendance register at the start of the first session in the morning and once during the second session of the day. On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil is:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Unable to attend

5. Present at school, absence, and lateness

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If they leave the premises that attendance mark stands in terms of coding although they will be marked absent on lesson attendance records.

It is the duty of parents/carers to ensure that students attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens disruption to the learning of all students.

Internal briefings and meetings are weekly where attendance of students is discussed, all absence is discussed by tutors with students and parents/carers.

Pupils should arrive at 9.00, ready to start learning at 9.15 unless an alternative time has been agreed. The afternoon session starts at 12.00.

Calls will be made home to report absence. If the student arrives up to half an hour after the register opens, then they will be marked late (L). This counts as present. If they arrive after this, it will be recorded as a 'U' code and will not count in their overall percentage attendance, following statutory guidance.

A call will be made home for students who do not arrive and their absence may be authorised if there is a valid reason. See appendix one – Attendance codes.

When a student arrives late, they miss part of their planned day. This may be part of a lesson, tutor period or meeting. It can often cause difficulties for a student to walk into a session late as well as having an impact on others.

6. Authorised Absence

Authorised absence means that the college has either given approval in advance to be away from school, or an accepted explanation has been offered as justification for absence. In most cases where absence is reported as illness, this will be authorised. Unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. In these cases we follow the 2019 DfE School Attendance Guidance 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. If a parent/carer has concerns about their child's mental wellbeing, they should contact their child's key adult in the first instance.

If a student is with us for medical reasons, the place and programme will have been agreed based on medical evidence, which has to be reviewed by the medical professional every 6 weeks. Absences are still recorded and not automatically authorised.

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to being unwell – this could be medically or due to mental ill health – this will be an agreement between school staff and home.

7. Appointments

All appointments such as Dentist and Doctor should be made outside of school hours where possible. If this is not possible, then the student should be out of school for as little time as possible. Advance notice should be given for this.

8. Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

9. Traveller Absence

TDPC will authorise the absence of a Traveller 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 him to travel from place to place. Individual cases will be discussed with parents as necessary. Where possible in these cases the child should attend the school where the family is travelling to and should be dual registered at that school.

10. Suspensions

If a student is sent home due to their behaviour this will be recorded as a Suspension. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on Suspensions. Any suspension must be agreed by the Headteacher. Parents/carers will be notified and if the child is a Looked After Child the Social worker and the Virtual School will also be notified. If a child is open to social care the social worker will also be informed.

11. Absence procedure – see appendix 4

If your child/young person is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence by phoning the centre and keeping us informed of further absences if the absence lasts longer than one day. (See attached Centre contacts – appendix 3)
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Do welfare checks if we do not hear from you or if we have concerns
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with one of our Safeguarding Team, or a member of the Leadership Team if absences persist

Following recent advice from a serious case review, if we do not verify the whereabouts and safety of any child, we will contact all other emergency contacts supplied to us. If we have no response, this will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a cause for concern and we will call 101 to request a welfare check.

12. Holidays and unauthorised leave in term time

We expect parents/carers to help us by not taking children away in school time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. In line with Government Policy regulations the school will not grant any leave of absence during term time except for exceptional circumstances.

- Religious observance. A maximum of a days absence is allowed for religious observance
- Medical, dental or hospital appointments. We encourage these appointments to take place out of school time. Where this is not possible we will require proof of the appointment in order to authorise the appointment.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school 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. The school 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 Headteacher's discretion. Circumstances which could 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 school. 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 Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence, it includes:

- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get the session mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Caring for siblings
- Waiting at home for a delivery
- Day trips
- Long weekends or holidays in term time

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually in the form of Penalty Notices or Prosecutions.

A pupil may attend their day of education elsewhere. These are classes as 'offsite' educational activities that have been approved by the school. Examples include an Alternative Education provider or another school or pupil referral unit. If in exceptional circumstances our school site is closed, or transport is not available or there is an exceptional reason why the school needs to close then the student will be marked accordingly.

13. Support for poor attendance

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.

As a school, we 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. We can offer support through our Parent Family

Support Advisor and the use of an Emotional Based School Avoidance assessment to understand the barriers to attendance, the existing protective factors and plan next steps. We will support with regular meetings.

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. If our 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. Attendance will also have been raised with the parent. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a 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.

14. Part-time Timetables

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, a pupil is unable to access 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 part-time timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to a full-time timetable. Any part-time provision will be communicated with parents and agreed and a written, signed record will be kept and reviewed on a regular basis.

15. 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 can refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold, currently 10 unauthorised sessions in 12 school week period, 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. 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 a Penalty Notice. The penalty is £80 per parents payable within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.)

16. Prosecution

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court could also give you a Parenting Order (See DfE's statutory guidance on School

attendance parental responsibility measures for more information and Somerset County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct). 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.

17. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The school will follow Somerset Child Missing Education process and make CME referrals as appropriate.

18. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school 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 1 school day, we will mark 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. See protocol in section 4. We may also do a home visit.

19. Reporting to Parents

We report to parents on a regular basis about their child's attendance. Attendance is a key part of the termly review which also focusses on progress in other areas. Parents/carers will be contacted on a regular basis in addition to this by the key teacher to discuss progress in all areas.

20. Staff responsibilities

Those people responsible for attendance matters in the Centre are:

- Tutor – It is the Tutor who will make regular contact with parents/carers to discuss attendance alongside progress in other areas. Where there is a concern, the student will be discussed with other key teachers and a member of SLT at the weekly centre meeting. It is here that strategies for improvement maybe suggested/put in place.
- Safeguarding Team and Attendance lead – This team lead by the Designated Safeguarding lead, have an overview of the attendance of all students and may follow up concerns with families or other agencies.
- SLT – SLT consists of the Head, Deputy, Assistant and SENCo. The Deputy has an oversight of attendance and progress for students in the centres. This monitoring will raise concerns so that SLT ensure that there is a follow up plan
- Office staff take and make calls and messages. This will be logged on the school system.

Appendix 1



TERM TIME LEAVE - ADVICE FOR SCHOOLS AND PARENTS

Amendments to the 2006 regulations were made by the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#) and came into force on 1 September 2013.

The amendments made it clear that Headteachers may only grant leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances. Any request for leave must be made in writing to the Headteacher in advance.

There is no formal definition offered for exceptional leave at present by the Department for Education. However, from discussion with the DfE and professional associations it is suggested that exceptional leave would be:

- Rare
- Significant
- Unavoidable
- Short

(NAHT, 2014)

Somerset County Council (SCC) supports schools:

- In expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school regularly. Any absence from school will impact on educational achievement, success in later life and longer-term health and well being
- In ensuring the law is upheld. Parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where they are on roll. Schools must explain their stance on term time leave in their attendance policy so that parents/carers are clear on expectations and potential consequences, such as **any unauthorised absence including taking term time leave not agreed with the school, can result in legal action being taken including Penalty Notices and court prosecution.**

SCC cannot override a school's decision not to authorise any term time leave.

Taking a child on holiday in term time interrupts the learning of the whole class and teachers have to spend time helping children catch up when they return. Parents should arrange holidays during the 13 week school holiday periods. Schools are open 190 days which leaves 175 days of the year for holidays.

Attached are suggested forms schools may wish to use when asked by parents/ carers for term time leave. Schools may wish to develop their own request forms.

REQUEST FOR TERM-TIME LEAVE

To the Headteacher

School/College

I wish to apply for term time leave for my child

Name	Class
1.	
2.	

from

to

inclusive

The Exceptional Reasons for this request are:

Signature
(Parent/Carer)

.....

Date

.....

Please make your request prior to making any bookings and at least four weeks before the anticipated leave date.

NB. If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in a penalty notice being issued or legal action taken for poor attendance.

APPROVAL LETTER

Dear

Name of Child:

Re: Request for Term Time Leave

Thank you for your request for term time leave.

I am in agreement this is for exceptional reasons and have authorised this leave.

The leave is from to

Should the leave be extended for any reason, the extension may be regarded as unauthorised absence which may be used in any legal action for poor school attendance.

Signature
(Headteacher)

Date

LETTER OF REFUSAL

Dear

Name of Child:

Re: Request for Term Time Leave

You have requested school days leave.

Your request for term time leave has been carefully considered but unfortunately it has not been possible to authorise it for the following reasons:

The reasons are not considered exceptional

The leave has not been requested in advance

Other

Please be aware that if you decide to proceed with the Unauthorised term time leave the school may request a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority.

Signature
(Headteacher)

Date

Appendix 2

For any unauthorised leave absence during term time, the school can make a request to the education attendance service/Local Authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued as a result:

- **each parent** may be issued with a Penalty Notice for each child who is absent from school as a result of unauthorised leave of 10 sessions or more (5days)
- a maximum of one Penalty Notices may be issued per parent, per child in a 12 month period
- the legal definition of a parent is contained in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and refers to any adult who is a natural parent, someone with parental responsibility or someone who cares for a child
- the penalty notice is a fine of **£80 payable within 21 days** of its date of issue. If this payment is not received in full the amount payable will double to £160 payable in full within a further 7 days
- if the Penalty Notice is paid, no further action will be taken for that offence period. However, if no payment is made or if there are further unauthorised absences, the education attendance service/LA may take further legal action, which may result in court proceedings.

Appendix 3

With regards to children of compulsory school age found in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusion:

The Local Authority have powers to implement a Penalty Notice to those parents or carers whose children are seen in a public place without a justifiable reason. The amount is £80.00 as in appendix one. A police constable, local authority officer, Head teachers and those authorised by them are authorised to request Penalty Notices.

Centre Contacts	Holway Centre
Address	Byron Road, Taunton TA1 3JD
Contact Number	01823 349338
Contact email	office@tdpc.somerset.sch.uk
Head teacher	Kim Lawrence

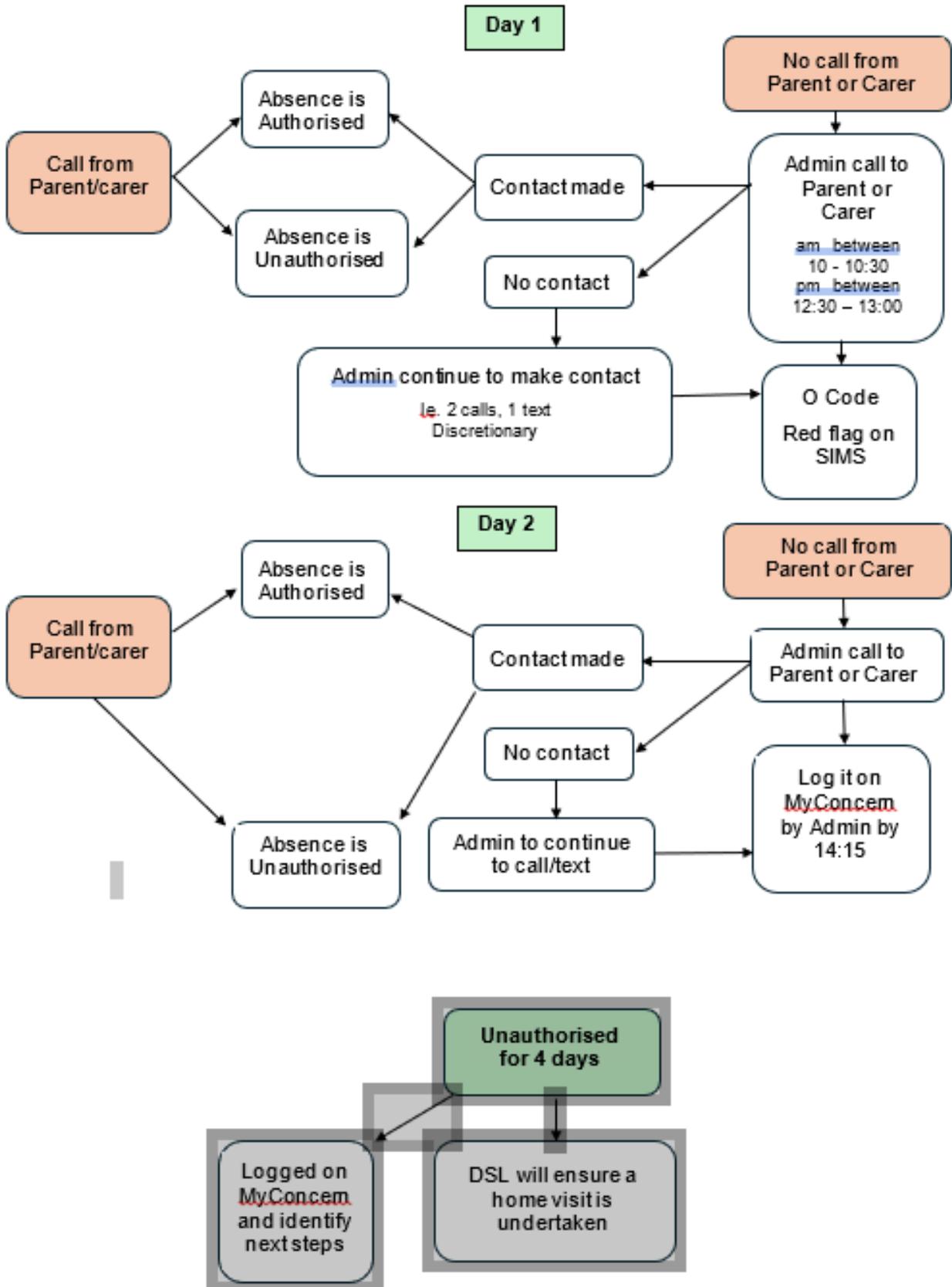
Attendance Policy Reply Slip

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the Attendance Policy at The Centre.

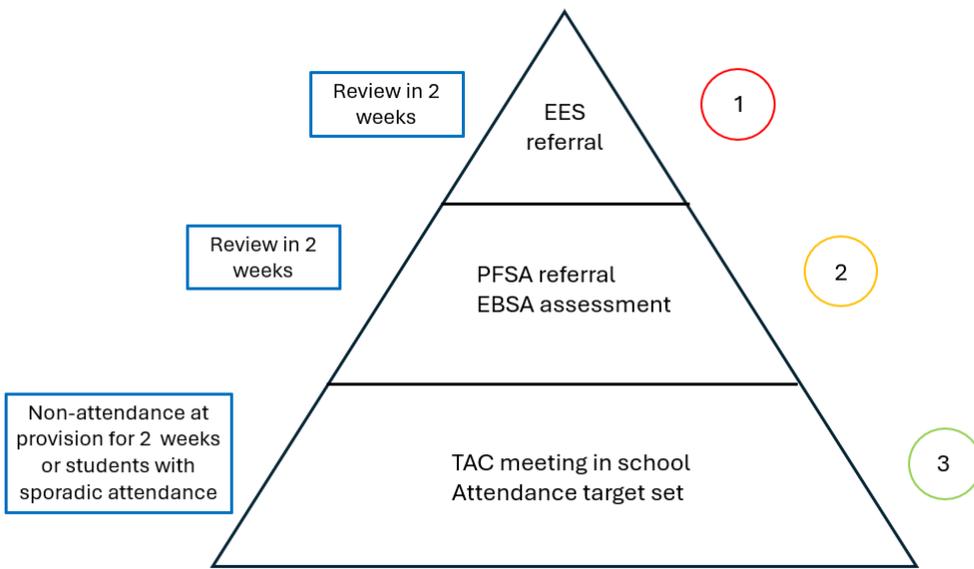
SIGNED	
PRINT NAME	
CHILD'S NAME	

Appendix 4

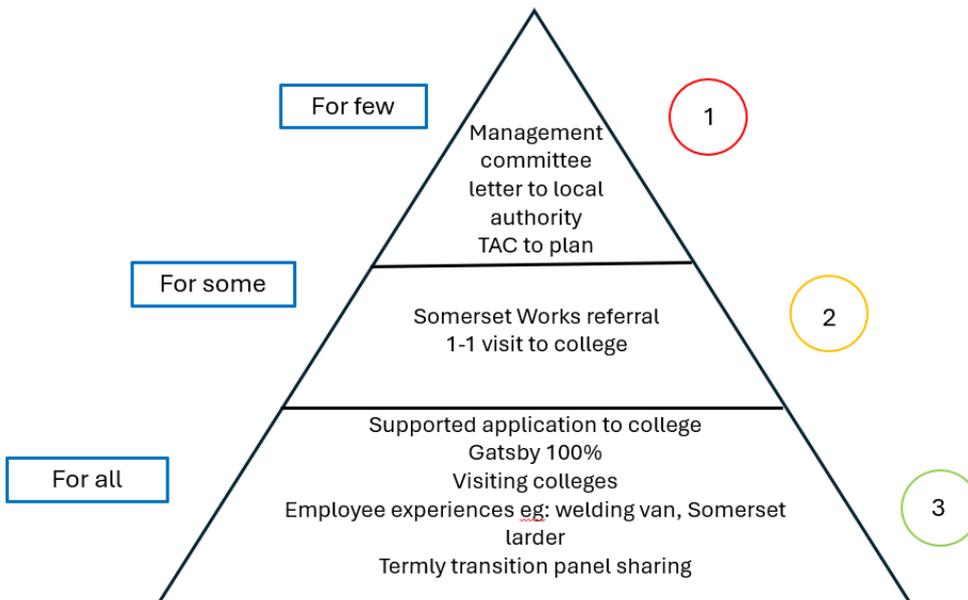
Absence Procedure flowchart



Appendix 5



Graduated response to attendance concerns



NEET graduated response

Appendix 6 – Summary Table of Responsibilities

These following tables form part of the statutory guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).

Responsibilities for All Pupils			
Parents	Schools	Governing bodies and Trustees	Local authorities
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and to do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole-school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

Responsibilities for Pupils at Risk of Becoming Persistently Absent			
Parents	Schools	Governing bodies and Trustees	Local authorities
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as a lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently absent, severely absent, or at risk of becoming so.</p>

	<p>as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service.</p> <p>Where the lead practitioner is outside the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>		
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Responsibilities for Persistently Absent Pupils			
Parents	Schools	Governing bodies and Trustees	Local authorities
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence become persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary, this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in the future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

Responsibilities for Severely Absent Pupils			
Parents	Schools	Governing bodies and Trustees	Local authorities
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absence pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absence pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration of an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring join working between the school, children's social care service and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>

Responsibilities for Cohorts with Lower Attendance than their Peers			
Parents	Schools	Governing bodies and Trustees	Local authorities
<p>Not applicable.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk if, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where</p>

	Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.		they impact numerous schools.
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Responsibilities for Pupils with Medical Conditions or SEND with Poor Attendance

Parents	Schools	Governing bodies and Trustees	Local authorities
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with the pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists and mental health services to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

Responsibilities for Pupils with a Social Worker

Parents	Schools	Governing bodies and Trustees	Local authorities
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Know who the pupils are who have, or who have had, a social worker are.</p> <p>Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort.</p> <p>Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.</p> <p>Work with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Ensure all Children's Social Care practitioners understand the importance of good school attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it.</p> <p>Through the work of virtual school heads, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.

Responsibilities for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

Parents	Schools	Governing bodies and Trustees	Local authorities
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand</p>	<p>Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated</p>	<p>Designate a member of staff to the responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and</p>	<p>Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care.</p>

Responsibilities for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

Parents	Schools	Governing bodies and Trustees	Local authorities
<p>their child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked after children that support good attendance.</p> <p>Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on the use of Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.</p>	<p>previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.</p>	<p>(LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school – wherever they live or are educated. • Ensure schools know when they have a pupils looked after by the local authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. • Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus. • Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.

Monitoring Attendance

Parents	Schools	Governing bodies and Trustees	Local authorities
<p>Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.</p> <p>(If parents feel the school and or local authority have not delivered what they are expected to they should discuss the case with the school and/or the local authority's attendance support team.)</p>	<p>The school's Senior Attendance Champion will ensure all school-based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures.</p> <p>The governing board or academy trust will hold the headteacher or executive leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance.</p> <p>Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group considers multi-academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making.</p> <p>Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.</p> <p>Ofsted may consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children and young people with SEND as part of the SEND Area Inspection, and the local authority's approach to improving attendance for children with a social worker through inspecting local authority children's services.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a local authority has not met expectations or statutory duties, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>

Appendix 7 – The Support-First Approach to Attendance

We have high aspirations for all our pupils. Where there are barriers to attendance, we will work with pupils, their families and other support services to ensure support is available to improve attendance. Where this support is not engaged with or fails, we will work with the Local Authority to consider formalised support and the appropriate use of statutory frameworks, including prosecution, to improve attendance.

This support-first framework forms part of the statutory guidance to support good school attendance.

EXPECT	Aspire to high standards of attendance for all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
MONITOR	Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns or 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 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 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 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 a parenting contract of education supervision order.
ENFORCE	Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the child's right to education.

Appendix 8 – Information for Parents About Penalty Notices

Information for Parents about Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence from School

Following the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised absences recorded after 19 August 2024. This information refers to penalty notices that are considered for irregular attendance and unauthorised term-time leave.

All penalty notices are issued within the [Somerset Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#).

Who can be fined?

Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer of each child whose unauthorised absence meets the national threshold.

For example, in a family with two parents and three children taking unauthorised term-time leave, each parent could receive a penalty notice for each child absent from school, resulting in six penalty notices being issued.

The National Threshold

Schools are required to consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate when a child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. 10 sessions would typically be the equivalent of five days.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be a combination of any unauthorised absence codes (G, O, N or U).

The rolling ten school week period can span terms, school years and schools.

The First Offence

The first time a parent is issued with a penalty notice in relation to a child's absence, they will be able to pay the reduced amount of £80 if they pay within 21 days, otherwise the full amount of £160 is payable within 28 days.

The Second Offence

If a parent is issued with a second penalty notice within three years the amount payable will be £160 within 28 days. The reduced amount will not be available.

The Third Offence

If a parent becomes eligible for a third (or more) penalty notice within three years of the first being issued, a penalty notice can not be issued and the Local Authority will consider other measures to address attendance concerns. This may include prosecution, which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and the parent having a criminal record. If convicted, the offence will also show on any future DBS checks.

Not Paying a Penalty Notice

Penalty notices are only issued to parents when they have committed the offence of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

A penalty notice gives the parent the chance to write the offence off without needing to go to court.

It is not an offence not to pay a penalty notice, but the Local Authority may then prosecute the parent for the original offence.

The Law

Penalty notices are issued in line with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 when a parent has failed to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

Penalty notices can only be issued when:

- ✓ A child's absence meets the national threshold
- ✓ Support has been attempted (if appropriate)
- ✓ Issuing a penalty notice is compliant with the Somerset Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

Appendix 9 – Additional Resources to Support Attendance

Guidance for Parents on School Attendance

Here, the Children’s Commissioner provides information and resources to support parents with school attendance and school applications.

[Visit the guidance for parents on school attendance website.](#)



Is my Child too ill for School?

This website supports parents to understand whether their child is too unwell to go to school, including things to look out for, basic health advice and links to further information.

[Visit Is my Child too ill for School on the NHS website.](#)



Supporting Absence as a Result of Illness

This document outlines how you can work with schools and other agencies to support a child that is absent due to illness.

[Open this PDF document on the Children’s Commissioner website.](#)



Somerset Early Help Assessment

This document can – and should – be used to support children and families experiencing significant barriers to attendance.

[Open this Word document on the Professional Choices website.](#)



Working Together to Improve School Attendance

This statutory guidance outlines how parents, schools and local authorities should work together to support children and their families.

[Open this PDF document on the Department for Education website.](#)



Emotionally Based School Avoidance

This website provides support, training and advice for parents whose children are experiencing emotionally based school avoidance.

[Visit the Somerset website for Emotionally Based School Avoidance](#)



Connect Somerset

The Connect Somerset partnership provides a huge amount of information about the support available in your community and how to access it.

[Visit the Connect Somerset website for local support and information.](#)



Appendix 10 – Attendance Codes and Definitions

The table below shows all attendance and absence codes available to schools as of September 2024. All schools are required to mark every child's register twice a day using the appropriate code.

New codes have been introduced for September 2024, most notably the updated C1 and C2 codes, codes Y1 to Y7 and the K code.

✓ = Yes ✗ = No – = Not applicable (codes that do not count towards a child's attendance)

Code	Definition	Present	Authorised
/	Present (morning session)	✓	✓
\	Present (afternoon session)	✓	✓
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	✓	✓
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	✗	✓
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	✗	✓
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	✗	✓
D	Dual registered at another school	–	–
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	✗	✓
G	Holiday not granted by the school	✗	✗
I	Illness	✗	✓
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	✗	✓
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	✓	✓
L	Late arrival before the register is closed	✓	✓
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	✗	✓
N	Reason for absence not yet established	✗	✗
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	✗	✗
P	Participating in a sporting activity	✓	✓
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	–	–
R	Religious Observance	✗	✓
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	✗	✓
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	✗	✓
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	✗	✗

Code	Definition	Present	Authorised
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	✓	✓
W	Attending work experience	✓	✓
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	–	–
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	–	–
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	–	–
#	Planned whole school closure (e.g. school holidays, INSET days)	–	–

Deleted Codes

From September 2024 the following codes are no longer available and must not be used:

- H code – all authorised term-time must now be coded with the C code
- J code – replaced by J1
- Y code – replaced by Y1 to Y7

Use of the B Code

The Department for Education has clarified that the B code can only be used when a pupil is taking part in an approved educational activity and that they are physically supervised by an adult considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training and knowledge. It cannot be used for remote learning, even if supervised by a parent.

Use of the Q Code

The Q code can only be used when a child is unable to attend because the local authority is responsible for arranging school transport and this has not yet been set up. Where local authority transport has been set up but fails (e.g. a taxi does not arrive or the bus breaks down), the Y1 code must be used.

Appendix 11 – Notice to Improve School Attendance letter



Taunton Deane Partnership College
Holway Centre, Byron Road, Taunton,
TA1 2JD
Tel: 01823 349338
Headteacher: Kim Lawrence

Notice to Improve School Attendance

Child Name (DOB)

Regular school attendance is hugely important. For your child to fully benefit from their education, they need to attend on time, every day possible.

If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly, the child's parent may be guilty of an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

You, [Forename] [Surname], are a parent/carer of [Pupil Name] (called in this notice "the pupil") who is a registered pupil at [School Name].

The school has offered support to you and your family to try and help improve [Pupil Name]'s attendance, including:

1. Telephone calls

We have contacted you every day the pupil has been absent to understand the reasons for those absences and offer support for any issues that may be preventing their attendance at school.

2. Attendance support letters

We have written to you about [Pupil Name]'s attendance to tell you about the impact of their continued absences and invite you to contact us to discuss the situation further.

3. Team Around the Child meeting

You were invited to a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting to work with support services together to improve [Pupil Name]'s attendance. You were told about the impact of their absence and the potential consequences if they have further ~~unauthorised~~ absences.

Despite the support that has been offered, [Pupil Name's] attendance remains a cause for concern:

Attendance	Enter attendance %
Sessions of absence	Enter number of sessions
Sessions of unauthorised absence	Enter number of sessions

Between [Start Date] and [End Date] the pupil failed to attend regularly at [School Name], which resulted in 10 sessions (half days) or ~~more of unauthorised~~ absences being recorded. Please see the attached registration certificate for details.

You now have [insert number] school days ([insert weeks] weeks) in which to improve your child's attendance. During this time there must be significant improvement in attendance. If sufficient improvement is not made or if ~~unauthorised~~ absences take place during this period, a penalty notice may be issued.

Penalty notices can be issued to each parent of each child and are charged at £160, if paid within 28 days. There may be the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days.

If you wish to discuss this notice, or what further support is available, please contact our team as soon as possible:

Kim Lawrence
Headteacher